

THE NEW GOD  
AND  
OTHER ESSAYS

RALPH SHIRLEY



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# THE NEW GOD



# THE NEW GOD

AND OTHER ESSAYS

BY

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## PREFACE

IT may be predicted with some confidence that one of the most salient features of the new century will prove to be the enhanced value attaching to the evidence of established fact, and the decreased stress laid on tradition, both on the part of its scientific and of its theological representatives. Nietzsche, in the volumes which embody his philosophical outlook, has called for a 'transvaluation of values' in the realm of morality. Whatever the new century demands in this direction, I think it will be certain to ask for a revaluation of values as regards the criteria of the evidence on which its conclusions are based. This will inevitably lead to an attitude of mind on the part of its leading thinkers which, viewed from the present standpoint, will appear at once more sceptical, and more credulous than that of the present day—more credulous where the conclusions implied in the acceptance of the facts contra-

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dict the bases of orthodox science ; more sceptical where the blinding effect of ancient tradition still prevents our contemporaries from regarding facts, in the realm of religion and theology in especial, in a dry and dispassionate light.

It is not the object of these essays to draw final conclusions in the matters dealt with, but rather to suggest new views and ways of thought. Evidence has accumulated, especially in the region of psychical research, which must inevitably lead to the acceptance of facts quite antagonistic to the present scientific standpoint. It may be admitted that the evidence in many cases is not conclusive. At the same time it is often very strong. It is well to look a little ahead, and to ask ourselves : If these things are so, how will it affect our relation to the accepted dogmas of present-day science ? What modifications shall we have to make in our opinions in order to admit these facts, if facts they can be proved to be, within our scientific temple ? Generally speaking, our contemporaries have been more ready to accept or to half-accept the new evidence than to look ahead and see what this new evidence will involve in the way of change in our mental outlook. It

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seems to me that it is high time that we should be prepared to face not merely the acceptance of the evidence, but the deductions to which this evidence inevitably leads, however great the shock this may give to the religious or scientific tradition.

The essays in the present volume are not a little diverse in character, and the connecting link between them may not always appear obvious; but in every case they have relation nearer or more remote to problems of religion or psychic enquiry. I feel that in many cases the questions which have been dealt with have been dealt with inadequately and superficially, and there are several which, had time permitted, I should have much preferred to have re-written. I am afraid, however, that this would have involved an indefinite postponement of publication, and I prefer to rest whatever appeal they may possess on the supreme interest of the subject matter with which they, most of them at any rate, deal.

The circumstances under which the essays were written have prevented me from giving in the text as complete references to authorities consulted, as I could have desired; but I should like to take this opportunity of making my special acknowledgments to the

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excellent translation of Nietzsche's works published by Mr T. N. Foulis, of Edinburgh and London, of which I have freely availed myself, and also to Mr W. R. Trowbridge, the author of the new *Life of Cagliostro* published by Messrs Chapman & Hall.

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‘They chose new gods.’—JUDGES V. 8.

THERE has been a bloodless revolution in the kingdom of heaven. Silently but no less surely the Puritan Divinity has evacuated the celestial throne and made way for a Deity of a more facile temperament.

So it was in Sicily in the days of Robert, brother of Pope Urbane. Unmarked and unnoted the angel of the Lord took up the administration of the island realm. Disguised in the semblance of the king the keen eyes of the courtiers detected in him nothing unusual. Only in the effects of his beneficent rule was there any evidence that a change had taken place. Only in the abnormally bounteous harvests and in the perennial buoyancy of the Stock Exchange was there ground for suspicion that the reins of government were in other than mortal hands.

Neither did we note when the transfer of

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power took place in the Eternal Realms. No newspaper boys proclaimed it in strident tones through the public thoroughfares. There were no cries of *Le Dieu est mort, vive le Dieu* to awaken our sleeping spirits to the altered outlook. Only by-and-bye we noted that the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven weighed upon our shoulders less heavily. Only we observed that the demands made upon us by its officials on earth were less exacting, that the dues were collected less rigorously. Only in the relaxation of the fetters with which the human intellect lay bound, did we realise that, unsuspected by us at the time, an event had occurred in Heaven fraught with the most momentous consequences for the children of men.

There is nothing in common between the easy opportunism of the new reign and the stern orthodoxy of its predecessor. The 'fiend with names divine' that haunted the puritan's nightmare has gone for ever. In his stead reigns the new God, of whom his worshippers may reflect in the consoling words of the old Persian poet that

He's a good fellow, and 'twill all be well.

There never was an age more tenacious

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of the name of Christian than our own or more indifferent to the main dogmas of Christianity. There never was an age with a greater passion for critical analysis or a sublimer faith in vague generalities.

We reject piecemeal the very basis of our belief, only to reassert it comfortably enshrined in the ambiguous phrases of the philanthropist or metamorphosed by the allegorical interpretations of the Christian mystic.

This change in our attitude towards religion, carefully veiled though it be by the retention of old names that have lost their meaning, is the measure of a revolution in the mode of thought of man which is in process of transforming all departments of our mental activity. In attempting to shut our eyes to its import we are only darkening counsel and giving rise to needless misconceptions through fear of calling things by their real names. The medicine is changed. The label on the bottle remains as before.

This unwillingness to look facts in the face, disguise it how we may, is undoubted evidence of that loss of mental and moral virility which is so constantly associated with periods of intellectual change and transition.

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The dangers with which we are threatened to-day are not those which confronted our fathers. *They* were in danger of believing in absurdities through sheer force of habit: *we* are in danger of believing in shadows. *They* were menaced by dogma: *we* are menaced by our own open-mindedness. *Their* danger lay in the strength of their convictions: *ours* in the fact that we have no genuine convictions at all. Nothing could penetrate the brazen cloak of *their* obdurate prejudices: *we* are receptive mediums for every passing wind of opinion. We have no original thoughts, no ideas to give us individuality, but every suggestion that is floating in the air finds a ready harbourage in our brains. We have ransacked the centuries in search of the opinions, the religions, the principles, the arts of our forefathers. Ours is the great age of revivalism. We are all bent on making the past live again. What matters it what it be? The spirit of the architecture of the past, the spirit of a smouldering Roman Catholicism brought back to life, the spirit of the East, mystic and measureless, the spirit of mediæval Italy, the spirit of early Christianity and early Christian socialism, we



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would fain revive them all—anything and everything that might give a spurious life to the dead present. We are never weary of harking back, never weary of plundering our forefathers' fields of their rich harvests, never troubling to plant our own for future generations to reap. It is not our forefathers who are dead, it is we. Like Hannibal's soldiers after crossing the Alps, we may well be described as *imagines, immo umbræ hominum*. Lacking in purpose, in intensity, in sincerity, in all that goes to make up character, we are but the vehicles for the opinions of others, the actors of other men's parts. True, we live in an age of mechanical ingenuity and political experiment, but is this sufficient compensation for our lack of individuality? Is this sufficient atonement, when we reflect that we have nothing left that we can call our own, if it be not the smoke of our manufactories and the stupendous complexity of our social life?

We have sapped the foundations of the faiths of our forefathers, but the whole atmosphere of our thought and feeling is steeped in the glamour of the sunset glow of dead or dying creeds. We still cling

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tenaciously to the corpses of our dead faiths, to the forms and ceremonies which were once animated by a living and life-giving belief. What would the zealot of the past find left of his dogmas if he cross-examined us on our articles of faith? How much that was solid ground and not shifting sand? He would find not Christianity at all, but aspirations after high ideals; not faith, but philanthropy; not the acceptance of what our fathers held to be deep religious truths, but a love of old forms and ceremonies and a tenacious conservatism. He would detect an infinite capacity for explaining away the essentials of Christianity and, to parody the poet's phrase,

Religion slowly watered down  
From sentiment to sentiment.

There is so much that is good (they tell us nowadays) in all the religious systems of the world; there is so much that is accidental in the particular form that our or our neighbour's religion may happen to take, that it would really be impertinent in us to say definitely that ours is better than anybody else's. We are freely assured that they are all equally true, but that this truth expresses

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itself to divers national temperaments in divers and various ways. And it adds a sense of comfort to our devotions to reflect that everybody has thought and has meant the same as we do all along, and that it is only their way of putting it that has been somewhat different. We are told that names are quite immaterial, and that what we mean by Christ the Buddhist means by Buddha ; and we feel that all religions are the expression of the realisation that there is something mysterious beyond us and above us after which we are all yearning.

This is what makes us so cosmopolitan in our appreciation and so universal in our receptivity, for we have learnt to recognise the truth of Falsehood and the falsehood of Truth and to see (doubtless as through a glass darkly) that alike in Truth and in Falsehood, Falsehood and Truth are about evenly divided.

We feel that the golden age of Theology is at hand when the lion will lie down with the lamb, the Roman Catholic and Protestant and the Buddhist together, and we cannot help thinking how nice this will be.

Perhaps, however, we are congratulating

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ourselves somewhat prematurely, for it does not require a very shrewd eye to appreciate the fact that the majority of the dogmas of Christianity occupy a position in religion to-day analogous to that of the Turk at Constantinople. They are in as caretakers, and liable to receive notice to quit at any moment. Even the more advanced of the clergy admit this from their pulpits. The only difficulty is that we do not know what to put in their place. Can we suppose that this difficulty is capable of solution? Most people to-day would answer 'No.' It may be, however, that a later generation, for whom psychical societies will not have worked in vain, will be able to substitute something more credible, more authoritative in tone, for the worn-out dogmas of the past. It may be that evidence will be forthcoming which will establish on the impregnable rock—not of the Holy Scriptures, but of Science—such facts as shall constitute for us a sure and certain hope in that which 'eye hath not seen, neither hath ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive.' It may be that scientific investigation will point the way to a truer conception of the essence of

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religion, and that through this purer channel rather than through disputing over old manuscripts of doubtful authenticity we shall learn to realise the existence of living truths, deep and mystical, the evidence for which among us, above us, beneath us, and around us is the breath of the universal Spirit of Life transforming itself into innumerable forms of beauty or of dread, permeating every pore of earth and air, ever ready when least suspected to spring forth into some new shape of consciousness from its chrysalis sleep—life unconquerable, immortal, protean!

It may be we shall at length recognise that at the source of all religions and all superstitions of all time, as an explanation and clue to every beginning of worship or of faith, there lay the faint suspicion of a consciousness of the supreme significance of this mystery which religion after religion has admitted, caricatured, and forgotten in turn.

The late Mr W. E. H. Lecky in a notable passage in his *History of the Rise of Rationalism in Europe*, has been at pains to show that the beliefs of earlier generations have not, generally speaking, lost their hold on

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mankind through scientific evidence being brought to bear on them which has shown them to be erroneous, but rather through their ceasing to be in sympathy with the spirit of the times, and thus first falling into neglect and then into disrepute and discredit, killed or blighted by the all-powerful Zeitgeist of an alien age, and unable to exist side by side with the new ideas and the new thought-atmosphere which has, for the time being, taken possession of the world. The history of European thought in the eighteenth century and the vicissitudes it underwent at that period afford numerous examples of old beliefs falling into discredit in this manner, some destined subsequently to revive with the revival of religious faith or the return of political stability, others apparently fated to melt away before the saner outlook of a more rationalistic age.

So disappeared the belief in witchcraft, in astrology, in magic and incantations, in the philosopher's stone, in a hundred other beliefs and superstitions tenaciously held and indeed never doubted during long ages of the world's history. And yet for all their long ascendancy over the mind of man they passed away in the end, not disproved nor

exposed as other faiths in our own age have been exposed (and have survived the exposure!), but simply dropping out of mind as a new generation arose, like some Homeric hero whom the Harpies snatched away without trace or record left behind. It was not necessary to be at the pains to disprove, such was the mental attitude of the day. The old wisdom was incompatible with the new knowledge. That was enough.

So a generation or two ago all faith in the survival of the personality after death seemed to be fast ebbing out at least among thinking men, a prey to the ridicule but not to the evidence of the exponents of the scientific dogmatism of the day. Herbert Spencer and Darwin had given it the *coup de grace*, it was thought, as at an earlier date astronomical discoveries had killed astrology. The new century shows a disposition in this respect to reconsider the conclusions of its predecessor, and to give the facts a new hearing.

Meanwhile, there are and must remain many among us who live in an atmosphere of permanent regret for lost religious ideals. These people, whose own soundness of judgment is to them a source of perpetual sorrow,

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turn upon the profane scientist not with the righteous indignation of the orthodox against the enemies of religious truth, but with the petulant temper of one who has tried to nurse an illusion into reality, and is confronted by Science with its brutal facts just when he begins to think that he has almost succeeded. There is no compensation to be obtained in our courts of law for injury done to cherished illusions, however irretrievable it may be, and the victim of Science not unnaturally thinks himself aggrieved by what he puts down as so much pure loss, instead of being grateful to her for saving him from himself. But the edict has gone forth, 'Take from him even that which he seemeth to have,' and the scientific police act up to their instructions. And rightly. For our own judgment will be falsified and our own method of living will be distorted and rendered untrue should we base it upon an admittedly false assumption leading in practice to an untenable position and to actions whose only justification is a fiction of fancy.

Whatever opinions we may hold, we cannot live truly if we are afraid to look facts in the face, if we are afraid to recognise



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the logic of evidence and prefer to nurture our illusions even when we know them to be unreal.

Surely the time is past for longing after lost ideals and worshipping at the shrines of deities in whose power to aid we have no longer faith. Surely we can better occupy ourselves with the stern facts of to-day than with the glowing fictions of yesterday. To abandon the beliefs of our childhood is not necessarily to abandon faith in a world unseen which may be as scientifically true and as scientifically provable as that which meets our material vision. Agnosticism cannot place a limit to our knowledge, and the last word of Science, with all deference to Dr Haeckel, was not spoken in the last century.

## PROPHETS AND PROPHECIES

I CONFESS that my sympathy always went out to Jonah over that little matter of the prophecy of the fall of Nineveh. He had had his instructions, as one gathers, from an authentic source, that within so many days Nineveh would be overthrown. But the net result of his proclaiming the fact was that the people of Nineveh repented in sackcloth and ashes, and so warded off their threatened doom. It goes, however, without saying that, when nothing happened, ninety-nine out of every hundred Ninevites maintained—not that their prayers had been heard—but that Jonah was a false prophet. What else was to be expected? It must be admitted, in fact, that Jonah was fairly ‘had’ in the matter. One wonders which Jonah regarded as the greatest misfortune, to be swallowed by a whale or to be given away in such a hopeless fashion. And the moral of it all seems to be that you must never

make predictions without qualifying them. This perhaps is somewhat cynical, but so was George Eliot's 'Do not prophesy unless you know!' which would limit one's predictions to eclipses and all such matters as depend upon the laws regulating mathematics remaining in *statu quo*. And yet predictions have been made, and very remarkably verified too, from time to time, in spite of George Eliot and the book of Jonah, though the *raison d'être* of successful prophecy remains as much a mystery as ever to the scientific mind.

It is true that orthodox divines have decided very wisely not to stand or fall by the merits of Biblical prophecy. The early Fathers of the Church thought differently, but their ingenious no less than ingenuous interpretations have only rendered them ridiculous in the eyes of posterity and the Higher Criticism. The prophecy that 'a virgin shall conceive and bear a son' only appears remarkable till we are made aware of the fact that the word interpreted 'virgin' merely connotes 'a young woman of marriageable age.' So stated it is a forecast that could be made with considerable confidence at any period of the world's history. The

only matter in connection with it requiring special fulfilment was the latter part, that 'they shall call his name Emmanuel.' Though it would have been a comparatively easy matter for the godparents, or those concerned, to bring about the fulfilment of Scripture in this detail, the fact remains that, in the case to which the prophecy was referred, they simply did not do so, obviously failing to realise what would subsequently be expected of them by the Christian Fathers. But the all-important problem presented itself to the Church at an early date: 'Could it be shown from the Hebrew Scriptures that the crucified Jesus was the Messiah of prophecy?' If so, Israel's covenant might justly be regarded as temporary; sacrifices, sabbath and circumcision might be superseded, and Christianity would be entitled to regard itself as the larger dispensation—the legitimate successor to Judaism. If not, how could they stop the mouths of hostile Jews or soothe the uneasy consciences of their proselytes?

Hence to prove that Jesus was the long predicted Messiah, as a necessary antecedent to the successful propagation of orthodox Christianity, was a matter of vital conse-

quence. Justin, Tertullian, Ignatius and others accordingly took up the cudgels in active defence of this position, and those who wish to see the so-called Messianic prophecies carefully tabulated cannot do better than refer to Justin's *Apology* addressed to the Emperor Antoninus Pius. The matter cannot be dealt with in detail in the present place, though it is certainly one of no little interest. It is sufficient here to say that in many cases the so-called predictions were obviously never intended to refer to the Messiah at all, and as the context conclusively shows were simply records of the trials and misfortunes of Jehovah's persecuted servant,\* while in others they are founded purely and simply upon a mistranslation of the original. Instances of the former may be found in numerous passages of Isaiah, as for example Isaiah l. v. 6-8; liii. v. 12; lii. v. 13-53, etc., and in the Psalms (*e.g.* Ps. xxii. v. 7. 16, 18, etc.). Of the latter perhaps the most celebrated instance, beyond the one already cited, is that in Job, mistranslated 'I know that my redeemer liveth.' This observation

\* See Matthew Arnold's essays, *St Paul and Protestantism, God and the Bible*, etc.

of Job, most appropriate in its proper context—but the relation of sentences to their contexts did not trouble the Early Fathers—is correctly rendered, ‘I know that he lives who shall clear my good name,’ a very natural retort of the holy man to his so-called ‘comforters,’ who suggested that his misfortunes were the penalty for his grave misdeeds in the past. Certain other of these passages (as for instance Gen. xlix. 10, etc., Num. xxiv. 17) were anticipations of the coming of a Messiah who should raise Israel to the acme of earthly prosperity, and were of course claimed to have been fulfilled by the coming of Jesus Christ (though as a matter of fact this did not fulfil them). They are, however, just the poetic expression of a nation’s not unnatural ambitions centred in the coming of some great leader who should turn the tide of their misfortunes and avenge them on their triumphant enemies. We find a similar idea expressed in the British tradition that looks forward to the coming again of the King Arthur of romance, and in those German legends which speak of the long sleep of Kaiser Barbarossa.\* Perhaps

\* Such legends, however, ‘take a back seat’ while a nation continues to enjoy prosperity.

in the case of Jesus Christ the similarity of the names Jesus and Joshua helped to suggest the idea of the fulfilment of some such national dream.

With regard to the historical prophecies in the Bible, it may be said in general that they are the expressions of hopes voiced with a confidence that was not always felt that the enemies of Israel would be eventually overthrown. In them the wish is, generally speaking, father to the thought, and they take the form of prediction as the strongest means of asseverating a belief in their ultimate fulfilment. It was only natural that the prophets of the Israelites should endeavour to keep their followers' 'pecker up,' as the phrase goes, by some such means of encouragement. It was, in fact, part of their business. The attempt, therefore, to discover when, where and how many of these so-called prophecies have been fulfilled is obviously beside the mark. This attempt, however, has been frequently made by more distinguished students than the Prophet Baxter, and has resulted in the forging of one of the most powerful weapons of ridicule with which the Hebrew Scriptures and their supposed inspiration—whatever

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that may be held to mean—have been assailed. For it is obvious that if, when a prophecy has been presumably fulfilled, no general agreement can be arrived at as to the circumstances which constituted its fulfilment, its value from a practical point of view may be written down to a very low figure.

Other Biblical prophecies may be classed in no spirit of mockery as prophecies after the event. The celebrated instance of this form of 'prophecy' is the book of the Prophet Daniel. The Higher Criticism among the abler minds within the Church itself has accepted the incontrovertible verdict of internal evidence that the date of the book of Daniel is subsequent in time to the events which it foretells. This, however, does not imply—as would undoubtedly at first sight appear—that the book in question is a bogus compilation. Rather is it probably to be classed in the same category as Cowper's well known verses on Boadicea, in which he makes the Druid priest voice to the British warrior queen prophecies of the future greatness of the British Empire.

Rome shall perish—write that word  
In the blood that she has spilt,

. . . . .



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Then the progeny that springs  
From the forests of our land,  
Armed with thunder, clad with wings,  
Shall a wider world command.  
Regions Cæsar never knew,  
Thy posterity shall sway;  
Where his eagles never flew,  
None invincible as they!

No one would accuse Cowper of forgery in such a case, and it is probable that the writer of the book of Daniel was equally guiltless. He merely gave his picture of the Hebrew prophet and of historical events fresh in the minds of his contemporaries a dramatic setting for literary and artistic reasons. But the point of view from which the book has been regarded through many centuries, until critical and historical investigation revealed the actual facts of the case, was naturally productive of an entirely false impression. How far the prophet Daniel was an actual, and how far he was a dramatic, personality does not concern us here, but one would fain hope that in the grand figure portrayed, the writer has caught more than a little of the leading characteristics of the original, and that the great Methodist hymn that has inspired so many thousands, and I hope will inspire very many thousands

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more, holds up the sorely needed example of a *real* hero of the past to those who flag and waver and procrastinate in the battle between the higher and the lower selves.

Dare to be a Daniel !  
Dare to stand alone !  
Dare to have a purpose firm !  
And dare to make it known !

One prophecy, however—and it seems to me that it is in many ways in its pregnant simplicity the finest prophecy in the whole Bible—has been put by the writer into the mouth of the angel Michael in, it would seem, an inspired moment. ‘Thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even till the time of the end! *Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.*’ It is safe at least to say that the very ample fulfilment of this prediction that the last half-century has seen would have staggered the writer of it. And as of general Biblical predictions probably the above is the most noteworthy, so of ‘Messianic predictions’ perhaps that of Virgil in the Fourth Eclogue, of the boy about to be born who was to restore again the glories of the golden age, is the most remarkable. Its close coincidence in time with the birth

of Jesus Christ shows how general was the expectation at this period of the appearance of some one who would bring about or initiate a new cycle in the world's history, and whether we take the view that these sort of expectations tend to fulfil themselves, or whether we hold with the English poet that

Coming events cast their shadows before,

or, to use the words of the great seventeenth century philosopher,\* that '*Le Présent est gros de l'Avenir*,' the prediction, coming as it does from a Roman source and from the mouth of one who was at once a poet and a mystic of the highest order, must needs strike us as most remarkable. That Virgil was 'also among the prophets' was recognised by early and mediæval Christians, witness among other curious evidences the employment of the *Sortes Virgilianae* as a sort of Christian parallel to the *Urim and Thummim* of the Hebrew hierarchy.

One further observation may not be out of place in the present context. The word 'prophecy' as used in the Bible has been a fruitful source of error. More often than

\* Leibnitz.

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not the word is there employed in the sense of 'to preach,' or 'to hold forth,' as we should say in the slang of to-day, and contains no reference whatever to the predictive art. There were schools of the prophets, analogous more or less, no doubt, to our ecclesiastical establishments and colleges for the education of the clergy, and people would have as soon gone to these places to gain an insight into future events as the Christian of to-day would go to the parish priest or curate.\*

It must then, I think, be admitted—to summarise my conclusions—that among the great predictions of definite future events justified by subsequent unmistakable fulfilment in the course of history those in the Bible cannot be held to take their place. It must be further granted that the main object of the writers in the Bible was to preach the law of conduct and the way to 'salvation' (to employ a much mis-used word) and not either primarily or secondarily, to predict the future. It is possible that the book of

\* The practice among young ladies of the present day of giving curates their hands to look at in order to 'read the lines,' may be cited against me, but I think I can afford to pass this over !

Revelations is an exception to this ruling,\* but this book stands so entirely by itself, is so abstrusely allegorical, and, if prophetic, has so entirely to do with an anticipated 'end of the world' (which happily seems at present still some way off), that in our present survey of fulfilled prophecy it does not appear necessary to take it into consideration, however interesting a study it may be on its own merits.†

Of extra-Biblical prophecy a very obvious division suggests itself. There are predictions pure and simple, prophecies in the proper sense of the term, and there are predictions which are unquestionably in the nature of intelligent anticipations of the future, to be placed to the credit of the shrewdness and soundness of judgment of the forecaster. It may be assumed offhand that it is in the former of these that we shall find matter of the greatest interest. I venture to think that the study

\* I suggest that the most plausible clue to this book lies in the fact that its author was obsessed by the sinister figure of the Emperor Nero in his character of persecutor of the early Christians.

† I notice the ordinary orthodox clergyman has a great tendency to ignore the book of Revelations. Why? Because it is not inspired? or because it is too much inspired for him to understand?

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of the latter will prove not the least fascinating and not the least informing of the two. Now prophecies proper (as I shall call the first of my two categories) are again susceptible of subdivision. There are the prophecies of the inspired prophet or clairvoyant who foretells an event because it is inspirationally revealed to him (he sees it in vision, or in dream, or in trance, or it is clairaudently heard by him), and again there are prophecies made by astrology, by cabalistic calculations, by palmistry, by geomancy or other similar methods, in which, apart altogether from clairvoyance and inspiration, the prophet deduces certain conclusions from certain definite signs or mathematical calculations.

One of the best instances of the first of these classes of prophecy is the detailed prediction of the fate of the Seaforth family by Coinneach Odhar or the Brahan Seer, as he has usually been called. Of the latter perhaps the most famous is the prediction of the fire and plague of London by William Lilly, the well-known astrologer of that day. Another celebrated instance is the 'geomantic' prophecy made by Lord Lytton of the destiny of Benjamin Disraeli, afterwards Earl of Beaconsfield.

The Seaforth prophecy has been frequently alluded to, but its details are not so well known to the public that a careful narrative of them should prove otherwise than acceptable to those interested in such subjects. It so happens that two books have recently appeared in which the matter in question is dealt with at some length. One of these is entitled *Highland Second Sight*, the latter part of which is a record of the prophecies of this remarkable character, and the other is a reprint of a book entirely devoted to the subject, by the late Alexander Mackenzie, F.S.A., with an introductory chapter by Mr Andrew Lang.\* I propose to summarise for the benefit of my readers the facts with regard to this singular prophecy; and first it may be desirable to say a few words about the history—partly, it is to be feared, legendary—of the prophet.

Coinneach Odhar Fiosaiche, known to posterity as the Brahan Seer, was born, according to the accounts received, at Baile-na-Cille, Uig, in the island of Lewis, early in the seventeenth century. He was born

\* *The Prophecies of the Brahan Seer*, by Alexander Mackenzie, F.S.A. (Scot). New Edition. Stirling, Evan Mackay.

on the then Lord Seaforth's property, and for that reason was employed on the estate and became, on account of his gifts, intimate with the family. Afterwards he removed to the neighbourhood of Brahan Castle, whence his usually accepted title. Tradition has it that while still in his teens he became possessed of a magic stone which endowed its owner with the gift of prophecy. The method by which he acquired this valuable possession is very variously related, but the fact that he possessed it and ascribed to it his prophetic powers is undoubted. It does not, however, appear clear that he used it as a crystal for 'scrying' purposes, but rather that he kept it about his person, as one might an amulet or a talisman. The prophecies of the Brahan Seer are referred roughly to the period between 1730 and 1769. The story of his death partakes of the legendary character of the events of his life, and it is hard to say where fact ends and fable begins. One point, however, appears certain. He incurred the enmity of Lady Seaforth by some ill-advised observation which was repeated to her and appeared to her to reflect on herself and her family, and she vowed immediate and condign



vengeance. He was pursued and finally apprehended. Before, however, surrendering himself, and when all means of escape were barred, he uttered the celebrated prophecy of the doom of the house of Seaforth. The prophet was taken to Chanonry Point, where use was made of the ecclesiastical authorities to get him burnt to death as a punishment for the alleged crime of witchcraft.

The Seaforth prophecy is thus quoted by Bain in his *History of Ross* :—

I see [said the seer] a chief, the last of his House, both deaf and dumb. He will be the father of four fair sons, all of whom he shall follow to the tomb. He shall live careworn, and die mourning, knowing that the honours of his House are to be extinguished for ever, and that no future chief of the Mackenzies shall rule in Kintail. After lamenting over the last and most promising of his sons, he himself shall sink into the grave, and the remnant of his possessions shall be inherited by a white-coifed lassie from the East, and she shall kill her sister. As a sign by which it shall be known that these things are coming to pass, there shall be four great lairds in the days of the last Seaforth, one of whom shall be buck-toothed, the second hare-lipped, the third half-witted and the fourth a stammerer. Seaforth, when he looks round and sees them, may know that his sons are doomed to death, and that his broad lands shall pass away to the stranger, and that his line shall come to an end.

This very remarkable prediction was ful-

filled in the person of Francis, Lord Seaforth, last Baron of Kintail (a contemporary of Sir Walter Scott) and his sons. Sir Walter Scott says of him that 'he was a nobleman of extraordinary talents, who must have made for himself a lasting reputation had not his political exertions been checked by a painful natural deformity.'

Indeed, in spite of the fact that he was deaf from boyhood, and had a partial impediment in his speech, he was distinguished for his remarkable attainments, and took an active part in political life. During the revolutionary war with France he raised a regiment of Ross-shire Highlanders, of which he was appointed lieutenant-colonel, and he ultimately attained the rank of lieutenant-general in the army. In addition to this he was for six years Governor of the Island of Barbadoes. Lord Seaforth was the father of four sons, one of whom died in boyhood, and also of six daughters. His three surviving sons, however, in accordance with the terms of the prediction, all predeceased him, the last, who was parliamentary representative for his native county, and remarkable for his talent and eloquence, dying a few months before his father, where-

upon the estates devolved upon his eldest daughter, Lady Hood, who married a second time, a grandson of the sixth Earl of Galloway, and eventually assumed the name of MacKenzie.

Lady Hood's husband died about the same time as Lord Seaforth, while admiral in command in the Indian Seas, and his youthful wife returned home from India in her widow's weeds to take possession of her paternal inheritance. Thus was held to be fulfilled the prophecy that a white-coifed lassie from the East should inherit the Seaforth estates. With regard to the Brahan Seer's prediction that she should kill her sister, this was fulfilled, or partially so, by the fact that she drove out with her sister, the Lady Caroline MacKenzie, in a pony carriage, when the ponies took fright, and she, being unable to retain control of them, became the unwilling cause of her sister's death. As to the Scottish lairds who in the days of the last Seaforth were to be distinguished by various physical defects, these defects are stated to have actually characterised four lairds at this period : viz., MacKenzie Baronet of Gairloch, Chisholm of Chisholm, Grant Baronet of Grant and

McLeod of Raasay. Not only was this last Lord Seaforth unfortunate in his family circle, and in his physical defects, but also, through the mismanagement of his estate in the West Indies, he was involved in financial embarrassments which compelled him to dispose of a large part of his Kintail property. His daughter was equally unfortunate with her inheritance, and one section of the estate after another had to be sold. Thus was completed the fall of the ancient house of the Seaforths of Kintail.

‘With regard to this prediction,’ observes Mr MacKenzie, in the book above referred to, ‘the prophecy was not found out after the events occurred. It had been current for generations in the Highlands, and its tardy fulfilment was marked curiously and anxiously by an entire clan and a whole county. Seaforth was respected and beloved far and near, and strangers, as well as friends and clansmen, mourned along with him the sorrows of his later years.’

A curious story is related by Mr MacKenzie about the manner in which Lord Seaforth lost his hearing. He says :—

The last Lord Seaforth was born in full possession of all his faculties. When he was about twelve years

of age scarlet fever broke out in the school at which he was boarding. All the boys who were able to be sent away were returned to their homes at once, and some fifteen or twenty boys who had taken the infection were moved into a large room, and there treated. After a week had passed, some boys naturally became worse than others, and some of them were in great danger. One evening, before dark, the attendant nurse, having left the dormitory for a few minutes, was alarmed by a cry. She instantly returned, and found Lord Seaforth in a state of great excitement. After he became calmer, he told the nurse that he had seen, soon after she had left the room, the door opposite to his bed silently open, and a hideous old woman come in. She had a wallet full of something, hanging from her neck in front of her. She paused on entering, then turned to the bed close to the door, and stared steadily at one of the boys lying in it. She then passed to the foot of the next boy's bed, and, after a moment, stealthily moved up to the head, and taking from her wallet a mallet and peg, drove the peg into his forehead. Young Seaforth said he heard the crash of the bones, though the boy never stirred. She then proceeded round the room, looking at some boys longer than others. When she came to him his suspense was awful. He felt he could not resist, or even cry out, and he never could forget, in years after, that moment's agony, when he saw her hand reaching down for a nail, and feeling his ears. At last, after a look, she slunk off, and slowly completing the circuit of the room, disappeared noiselessly through the same door by which she had entered. Then he felt the spell taken off, and uttered the cry which had alarmed the nurse. The latter laughed at the lad's story, and told him to go to sleep. When the doctor came, an hour later, to make his rounds, he observed that the boy was

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feverish and excited, and asked the nurse afterwards if she knew the cause, whereupon she reported what had occurred. The doctor, struck with the story, returned to the boy's bedside, and made him repeat his dream. He took it down in writing at the moment. The following day nothing eventful happened, but, in course of time, some got worse, a few died, others suffered but slightly, while some, though they recovered, bore some evil trait and consequence of the fever for the rest of their lives. The doctor, to his horror, found that those whom Lord Seaforth had described as having a peg driven into their foreheads, were those who died from the fever; those whom the hag passed by recovered, and were none the worse; whereas those she appeared to look at intently, or handled, all suffered afterwards. Lord Seaforth left his bed of sickness almost stone deaf; and, in later years, grieving over the loss of his four sons, absolutely and entirely ceased to speak.

Of other celebrities in the prophetic line, the best known are perhaps the French Nostradamus and our own Mother Shipton. Mother Shipton's name has attained an unenviable notoriety by the fact that she foretold, or was supposed to have foretold, that

In eighteen hundred and eighty-one  
The world to an end will come.\*

\* Mother Shipton's rhymes are a weak point with her. I am afraid she could hardly be classed even among the minor poets. Another of her predictions says that

When Highgate Hill is in the middle of London,  
The folk of these Islands will be undone.

a prediction which suggests that the Hampstead tube involves a subtle menace to the security of these realms.

The prediction, which was very much talked of about the period of its non-fulfilment, may not have been a fair specimen of Mother Shipton's work. She enjoyed the reputation, along with the Scottish seer, of having predicted the coming of railways, steamships, and motor traction. We are, however, probably justified in not taking her very seriously. With regard to Nostradamus, who, by the way, flourished about the middle of the sixteenth century, this remarkable man, if he was a pretender, seems at least to have imposed pretty successfully on his contemporaries, royalty included. What he is quoted for most frequently in this country is, not unnaturally, his supposed prediction of the Fire of London. This ran as follows, in the barbarous French of that period:—

Le sang du juste a Londres fera faute  
 Bruslez par feu, de vingt et trois, les six ;  
 La dame antique cherra de place haute,  
 De meme secte plusieurs seront occis.

Nostradamus wrote his predictions dividing them into centuries, and the prediction in question referred apparently to the century following that during which the author lived.

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The expression 'de vingt et trois les six' (of twenty and three the sixes) has been ingeniously twisted to indicate 1666, the year of the Great Fire. It does not, however, appear how the French words could bear this interpretation.

'La dame antique' (the ancient dame) is assumed to be an allusion to St Paul's Church, which stands on the site of an ancient temple of Diana. Who first started this theory I cannot say ; it certainly appears to me to be a strange interpretation. One can well imagine the resentment of the Queenly Huntress at so unflattering a soubriquet. The fact is, this is one of those old prophecies the current interpretation of which will not bear looking into with a critical eye. The mere fact of prophesying a fire in London in the succeeding century is hardly sufficient justification for a claim to the prophetic gift. The Delphic oracle which foretold to ancient Greece that 'a war would come, and pestilence along with it,' was hardly more vague and unsatisfactory. The sybil who foretold to Croesus that having crossed the Halys he would destroy a mighty empire, which eventually proved to be his own, deserves to be taken about as seriously. The



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wizard adviser of the negro potentate who foresaw

That something would come  
But not what that something would be

might challenge Nostradamus not unfairly on the strength of this particular forecast.

The prophet who really made a successful prediction about the fire and plague of London was the astrologer Lilly ; and here we come to the second class of prophecies, those which are deduced from certain definite signs or mathematical calculations, and do not lay claim to be the result of the inspiration of the seer. Nothing could be more practically common-sensible than Lilly's explanation of the astrological facts on which he based his forecast, viz., that in the year 1658, the aphelion of Mars, the signification of England, would be in Virgo, the ascendant of the English Monarchy. The fulfilment of this prediction, it will be remembered, led to Lilly being examined by a Committee of the House of Commons on his reasons for his astrological judgment. He states in his Almanac for 1651 :—

In the year 1658, the aphelion of Mars, who is the general signification of England, will be in Virgo, which is assuredly the ascendant of the

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English Monarchy;\* but Aries of the Kingdom. When this absis, therefore, of Mars shall appear in Virgo, who shall expect less than a strange catastrophe of human affairs in the Commonwealth, Monarchy, and Kingdom of England! There will then, either in or about these times, or near that year, or within ten years more or less of that time, appear in this Kingdom so strange a revolution of fate, so grand a catastrophe and great mutation unto this Monarchy and Government, as never yet appeared; of which, as the times now stand, I have no liberty or encouragement to deliver my opinion; only it will be ominous to London, unto her merchants at sea, to her traffic on land, to her poor, to her rich, to all sorts of people inhabiting in her or her liberties, by reason of sundry fires and a consuming plague.

The catastrophes of the fire and plague, it may be added, were portrayed in two hieroglyphics, in one of which two children are shown enveloped in flames, while the other, presumably referring to the plague, represents graves and corpses. The twin children are symbolical of the metropolis of the British Empire, which has from time immemorial been regarded as under the dominion of the sign of the zodiac Gemini or the Twins. Lilly himself states elsewhere that the ascendant of London is the 19th degree of Gemini.

\* Mars was retrograde in Virgo when Queen Victoria died, and Saturn was in Aries at King Edward's death.

The other prediction referred to above, viz., the geomantic horoscope drawn by Lord Lytton, prognosticating the future greatness of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield, need not be taken so seriously as Lilly's forecast. Geomancy is one of the hundred and one methods employed by people who have, or think they have, psychic capabilities and a mediumistic temperament, for arriving at facts with regard to the future, through getting in touch with what Theosophists have conveniently termed the 'astral plane,' and what earlier occultists were accustomed to call the *Anima Mundi*, or, Soul of the World. The phrase of Leibnitz, that the present is in labour with the future, has been taken by many as having a more literal meaning than perhaps even the German philosopher intended, and it has been assumed that events which are impending or are in process of being brought about can be ascertained beforehand, not merely by the natural shrewdness of the investigator, but by various ingenious methods of tapping this 'astral plane.' I should not, I think, be justified in saying that geomancy has more claim to reverence in this respect than the more ordinary methods of prediction by

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cartomancy, crystal gazing, or, indeed, looking into the grounds in a teacup. The justification for all is the same, if there is any justification at all, and this is that the person consulted has psychic power, and that any of these methods give him or her an opportunity of exercising it. If Lord Lytton (as he undoubtedly did) successfully predicted Disraeli's future by this means,\* it may be contended that he did it by virtue of certain psychic powers which he very possibly possessed, or, alternatively, it may be contended with equal probability that his prediction was nothing but a lucky hit. I give it, however, for what it is worth.

The geomantic symbols were distributed as follows :—

First House, <i>Acquisitio.</i>	Seventh, <i>Acquisitio.</i>
Second, <i>Conjunctio.</i>	Eighth, <i>Carcer</i>
Third, <i>Letitia.</i>	Ninth, <i>Fortuna Major.</i>
Fourth, <i>Puella.</i>	Tenth, <i>Fortuna Major.</i>
Fifth, <i>FortunaMaj.</i>	Eleventh, <i>Via</i>
Sixth, <i>Puer.</i>	Twelfth, <i>Fortuna Minor.</i>

The witnesses are *Populus* and *Fortuna*

\* I am indebted for these facts to the late Dr Richard Garnett, for so many years Keeper of the Books at the British Museum, whose interest in these subjects was well known. He observes with regard to this particular pre-

*Major*, and *Fortuna Major* is the Judge.

It will be apparent to those skilled in geomantic lore that the above is a wonderfully fortunate figure. There is but one symbol of misfortune in it—*Carcer*. *Fortuna Major*, the greater fortune, corresponding to Jupiter in astrology, presides over the entire scheme as Judge, and occupies three of the twelve houses, the house of pleasure, the house of literature, and the house of honour. The excellent figure *Acquisitio*, ominous of gain, is in the house of life, and also in the house of marriage, wherein Disraeli is known to have been eminently fortunate. Had the question been one of life, the sentence would have been *long*; if of money, *excellent*; if of honour, *great*; if of business, *lucky*. Relating as it did to the fortune of the person quoted as a whole,\* Bulwer Lytton was

diction: ‘This is certainly the greatest recorded feat in geomancy since the African magician discovered by its means that Aladdin, instead of being entombed in the bowels of the earth, had married the Princess of China.’

\* It is stated by Lord Morley in his *Life of Mr Gladstone* that Lord Lytton also cast a horoscope of that eminent statesman, though he does not publish it. I presume that in using the word ‘horoscope’ he refers to a geomantic prediction, and not an astrological one.

fully justified in forming the following flattering prognostication :—

A singularly fortunate figure. A strongly marked influence towards the acquisition of coveted objects.

He would gain largely by marriage in the pecuniary sense, which marks a crisis in his life. He would have a peaceful hearth, to his own taste, and leaving him free for ambitious projects.

In business he has not only luck, but a felicity far beyond the most favourable prospects that would be reasonably anticipated from his past career, his present position, or his personal endowments.

He will leave a higher name, than I should say his intellect quite warrants, or than would now be conjectured. He will certainly have *very high* honours, whether official or in rank, high as compared with his birth or actual achievements.

He has a temperament that finds pleasure in what belongs to social life. He has not the reserve common to literary men.

He has considerable veneration, and will keep well with Church and State, not merely from policy, but from sentiment and instinct.

His illnesses will be few and quick ; but his last illness may be lingering. He is likely to live to old age ; the close of his career much honoured.

He will be, to the last, largely before the public. Much feared by his opponents, but greatly beloved, not only by those immediately about him, but by large numbers of persons to whom he is personally unknown. He will die, whether in or out of office, in an exceptionally high position, greatly lamented, and surrounded to the end by all the magnificent influences of a propitious Jupiter.

No figure I have drawn surprises me more than this. It is so completely opposed to what I should

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myself have augured, not only from the rest of his career, but from my knowledge of the man.

He will bequeath a repute out of all proportion to the opinion now entertained of his intellect by those who think most highly of it.

Greater honours far than he has yet acquired are in store for him. His enemies, though active, are not persevering. His official friends, though not ardent, will yet minister to his success.

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IN the preceding paper I divided prophecies into two classes—the predictions of the inspired prophet, and the predictions which are in the nature of intelligent anticipations of the future, the deductions of the acute observer of the probable result of the working out of causes at the moment in operation. I alluded to the latter class of prophecies as those which were to be placed to the credit of the shrewdness and soundness of judgment of the forecaster. But if the reader is disposed to regard this capacity as merely a commonplace, every-day sort of gift, he is very much mistaken. It is a rare talent, a power given to few, and those few generally not such as are in a position to take advantage of it. To the politician, to the statesman, it is invaluable. But how many of the statesmen of Europe to-day possess it, even in an infinitesimal degree? Edmund Burke had it, but neither Pitt nor



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Fox showed any but rudimentary indications of it. The celebrated Lord Chesterfield possessed it to a much higher degree than any of the statesmen of his time. Of all the Presidents of the United States Lincoln and Washington were alone remarkable for it. In Gladstone, many-sided man as he was, it was conspicuous by its absence, witness his remarks about the American War between North and South, or again his prophecy about Lord Rosebery, and many other anticipations falsified subsequently by the event. Through lack of it Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury 'put their money on the wrong horse.' Lord Randolph Churchill, a far abler man than the majority of British premiers, in spite of his broad sympathies, took short views and arrived at precipitate conclusions. Lord Salisbury was more cautious than Lord Randolph, but they both expected to 'dine with General Boulanger at the Elysée,' though only Lord Randolph said so in public.\* Richard Cobden, the

\* My authority for this statement with regard to Lord Salisbury, is the late Monsieur Waddington, for many years French Ambassador in London, and an intimate friend of the Cecil family.

Protagonist of Free Trade, has proved himself in the eyes of Tariff Reformers and Free Traders alike the false prophet *par excellence*. Napoleon's extraordinary genius was devoid of it. Had he possessed prescience at all commensurate with his other talents he would never have died at St Helena.

Possibly the extreme rarity of this quality of prescience suggests that there is something more in it than mere common sense and sound judgment, and that even in this latter category of prophecies the psychic faculty of intuition plays its part. In any case it would be no easy matter to say where sound judgment ends and intuition begins.

The events that have called into play this singular faculty have naturally been in the main those which have come upon the world in general as surprises, and brought great changes in their train. Of these events none was more dramatic in its character than the great French Revolution. None, therefore, is a better object lesson in this study of the prescient faculty. It is, however, quite impossible that such far-reaching changes can come upon the world

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unheralded by many warning indications of which the observant will take note, and we find accordingly that though the French Revolution, when it came, took the world in general by surprise, it had been clearly anticipated thirty or forty years before by those who watched the signs of the times. It was thus rather in the judging of the character and ultimate results of the Revolution than in the mere anticipation of vast impending changes that prescience and foresight were required.

As early as the year 1753 Lord Chesterfield, in his letters to his son (Letter CCCIV), drew attention to the coming changes in France.\* Writing on Christmas Day he says to him :—

Wherever you are, inform yourself minutely and attend particularly to the affairs of France; they grow serious and, in my opinion, will grow more so every day. The King is despised, and I do not wonder at it. . . . His ministers are known to be as disunited as incapable. . . . The people are poor, consequently discontented. . . . The clergy never do forgive, much less will they forgive the Parliament; The Parliament never will forgive them. The army must, without doubt, take, in their own

\* *Lord Chesterfield's Advice to his Son.* Crown 8vo, cloth gilt, 1s. 6d. net. W. Rider & Son, Ltd., 164 Aldersgate Street, London, E.C.

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minds, at least, different parts in all these disputes which, upon occasion, would break out. Armies, though always the supporters and tools of absolute power for the time being, are always the destroyers of it too, by frequently changing the hands in which they think proper to lodge it. . . . The French nation reasons freely, which they never did before, upon matters of religion and government, and begin to be *spregiudicati*—the officers do so too; in short, all the symptoms which I have ever met with in history, previous to great changes and revolutions of government, now exist, and daily increase in France.

Elsewhere he says: This I foresee, that before the end of this century the trade of both king and priest will not be half so good a one as it has been.

Even more remarkable is Smollett's prediction, written at a later date (1771) in a letter to a friend, a few months before his death:—

France (he writes) appears to me to be the first probable theatre of any material change. If we consider the weakness, profligacy and abandoned debauchery of the French Court; the poverty, misery and discontent of the lower classes; and the violent desire of change, glowing and burning in the breasts of those who are the most able, and, indeed, the only people in whose power it is to bring a change about,—we need not hesitate to assert that some great revolution must ensue in the course of a few years, in the government, religion and manners of the people of that country. Were it possible for me to live and to witness it, I should by no means wonder to see the principles of republicanism predominant for a while in France; for it is the property

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of extremes to meet, and our abstract rights naturally lead to that form of government.

Whenever a revolution upon such grounds as these shall happen in France, the flame of war will be universally lighted up throughout Europe, either from the inhabitants catching the contagion, or from the apprehensions of their respective governments. I see it in the clearest light that the people of France, Germany and Italy (but more especially the latter) are about to become weary of the impositions of religion and the galling fetters of slavery, and I behold a new order of people about to arise in Europe, who shall give laws to lawgivers, discharges to priests and lessons to kings.

It is remarkable how Smollett realised in advance the proselytising form which the French Revolution was destined to take, and which constituted an appeal to the peoples of other countries. The *Contrat Social* of Rousseau was the Bible of the revolutionaries, and his words, 'Man is born free, yet everywhere he is in chains,' were as a trumpet blast that sounded from one end of Europe to the other.\* It was 'the rights of men,' not merely the rights of Frenchmen, that the revolutionist championed, and he regarded himself as authorised to go into all the world and preach the gospel of 'liberty, equality and

\* I might add that they found an echo in America as well. See the wording of the Declaration of Rights.

fraternity' to every creature. 'This constituted at once the great strength and the great danger of this extraordinary movement.\* Like Christianity it was a call and a summons to all peoples, tongues and languages. But, unlike Christianity, the kingdom of the *Social Contract* was of this world, the kingdom of King Demos, and his subjects were summoned as brother-slaves to rise against their oppressors and become brother-citizens instead. It was of this movement that Napoleon took advantage, and it was through doing so that as long as he had the peoples at his back he remained invincible.

If Smollett foresaw the republican issue and the outcome of the proselytising tendencies of the movement, Burke foresaw that it would give birth to a Napoleon, though this forecast was made after the outbreak of the Revolution. 'The army (he wrote) will remain for some time mutinous and full of faction, until some popular general who understands the art of conciliating the soldiery and who possesses

\* Rousseau also foresaw the coming of the Revolution. In his *Emile* he states that in his opinion Europe is approaching a period of crisis and a cycle of revolutions.

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the true spirit of command shall draw the eyes of all men upon himself. . . . But the moment in which that event shall happen, the person who really commands the army is your master, the master of your King, the master of your assembly, the master of your whole republic.' It is noteworthy also that Burke foresaw that the rock on which the *ancien régime* would be shattered would be the rock of finance.

He writes\* :—

Indeed, under such extreme straitness and distraction labours the whole body of their finances, so far does their charge outrun their supply in every particular, that no man, I believe, who has considered their affairs with any degree of attention or information, but must hourly look for some extraordinary convulsion in the whole system, the effect of which on France and even on all Europe it is difficult to conjecture.

In fact, if it had not been for the financial situation, there is no reason to suppose that the 'States General' would ever have been called together, or that the door would have been opened which rendered subsequent developments possible.

I have gone somewhat fully into detail

\* *Observations on the State of the Nation.* By Edmund Burke.

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with reference to the matter of the French Revolution and the anticipations concerning it, as it enables us to judge to what extent events of this nature can be and are foreseen by men of sound judgment and keen powers of observation. And we see as a fact that, given these powers, pretty accurate anticipations may be arrived at without the use of any special prophetic gift. That such prophetic powers were employed in this connection we have, indeed, curious evidence in the astrological predictions printed in Dr Sibley's *Illustrations of the Occult Sciences*,\* published in 1784, but their value must clearly be discounted when we see how near the shrewd man of the world was to hitting the mark.

To discount in this manner the prophecies of Cazotte with regard, not only to the Revolution itself, but to the actual fate of

\* In reference to a horary figure he had drawn on the subject he sums up as follows :—

‘Here is every prospect, from the disposition of the significators in the scheme, that some very important event will happen in the politics of France, such as may dethrone, or very nearly touch the life of the king, and make victims of many great and illustrious men in Church and State, preparatory to a revolution or change in the affairs of that Empire which will at once astonish and surprise the surrounding nations.’



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many individuals concerned in it, is a more difficult matter. That the celebrated dinner-party at M. Chamfort's actually took place there can, of course, be no doubt, but the celebrated French novelist\* has unquestionably embellished the details, and the imaginations of others have probably been at work where discrepancies between fulfilment and prophecy might have been detected. It is true Professor Gregory stated in 1850 that persons were then alive who had heard the prophecy given in detail before the Revolution began, but we have no signed documents or attestations of a valid character to support the actual predictions. Cazotte had a reputation for going into semi-trances, during which he foretold future events, and there is no reason to doubt that in one of these, at Chamfort's dinner party, he made predictions which had reference to many of those present and which effectually upset the harmony of a pleasant evening. But to admit this falls far short of maintaining that there is anything of real evidential value to

\* Dumas, in his novel *The Queen's Necklace*. Dumas has, however, taken a novelist's licence by changing the author of the prophecy from Cazotte to Cagliostro, and otherwise altering the setting of the piece.

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support the specific predictions said to have been made to Condorcet, Malesherbes, La Harpe, the Duchesse de Grammont, or any of the other celebrities concerned. To explain such prophecies, *if made as stated*, either by shrewdness on the one hand or by coincidence on the other would be simply to render oneself ridiculous.

More remarkable perhaps in its way than these prophecies of the French Revolution, is the prediction of Kinglake—the historian of the Crimean War—in his *Eothen*, with regard to the domination of England in Egypt. In reading it, it must be remembered that at the time it was made, and for very many years afterwards, France was the dominant power\* in the land of the Pharaohs. Kinglake is writing of the fascination and mystery of the Sphinx, and he says :—

Laugh and mock if you will at the worship of stone idols ; but mark ye this, ye breakers of images, that in one regard, the stone idol bears awful semblance of Deity—unchangefulness in the midst of change—the same seeming will and intent for ever and ever inexorable ! Upon ancient dynasties of

\* Until 1881, in fact, when the French Government of the day refused to intervene conjointly with England in the suppression of the insurrection of Arabi Pasha.

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Ethiopian and Egyptian kings, upon Greek and Roman, upon Arab and Ottoman conquerors, upon Napoleon dreaming of an Eastern empire, upon battle and pestilence, upon the ceaseless misery of the Egyptian race, upon keen-eyed travellers—Herodotus yesterday and Warburton to-day—upon all and more, this unworldly Sphinx has watched and watched like a Providence with the same earnest eyes, and the same sad, tranquil mien. And we, we shall die, and Islam will wither away; *and the Englishman, straining far over to hold his loved India, will plant a firm foot on the banks of the Nile* and sit in the seats of the Faithful, and still that sleepless rock will be watching and watching the works of the new busy race, with those same sad, earnest eyes, and the same tranquil mien everlasting. You dare not mock at the Sphinx.

While on the subject of prophetic anticipations I must not omit to cite Tennyson's line about

'The nations' airy navies grappling in the central blue.'

The last year or two has apparently brought within measurable distance a prediction that, I suppose, a decade earlier none of us looked to see fulfilled in our lifetime, and which many regarded as merely a poet's dream.

A gift of prophecy, such as is evinced in this instance by the poet Tennyson or

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by Kinglake with regard to the destiny of England in Egypt, or by Burke, Smollett or Chesterfield with reference to the French Revolution,\* is readily enough understood. We are all endowed with powers of judgment which enable us to put two and two together and deduce from the incidents and events of the day the probable developments of the immediate future. Most of us are wide enough of the mark in the majority of cases, but if we put our money on the wrong horse we do so because we fancy our judgment in horseflesh, because we have stable information which we think reliable, or for one reason or another intelligible enough.

But with regard to prophecies such as those of the Brahan Seer, or other predictions of this nature, the case is very different. The multitude has generally been content to sit and gape at these in mute astonishment, without attempting any explanation, and the scientist roundly to deny in the face of evidence, but neither attitude can commend itself to the philosopher-investigator of the twentieth century.

\* Cagliostro too has to his credit a prediction of the French Revolution. But this was at a much later date.

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The remarkable point about many of these prophecies of the Brahan Seer lies in the fact that they were fulfilled in the most trivial detail hundreds of years after the predictions were made. Some of us can recall or cite predictions of clairvoyants, the detailed fulfilments of which were equally remarkable. To accept the genuineness of such prophecies seems incompatible with a belief in freewill as usually understood, as it appears to imply the foreknowledge (existing somewhere) of all futurity and the consequent inevitable sequence of all events. Rather than admit such an apparently necessary deduction many have preferred to deny the facts.

Another such prediction is that relating to the destiny of the house of Macleod and recounted by the celebrated Dr Norman Macleod in one of his autobiographical sketches.\* I give it here as it exactly illustrates my point. After stating that he had heard the prophecy frequently repeated, that a number of people had copies of it, and that it antedated the circumstances he

\* These are to be found in the appendix at the end of *The Life of Dr Norman Macleod*, by his brother, the Rev. Donald Macleod. The story is cited in *Highland Second Sight* (Morrison & Macrae).

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narrated by at least a century, Dr Macleod proceeds :—

In the prophesy to which I am about to allude, it was foretold that when Norman, the third Norman, the son of the hard-boned English lady, would perish by an accidental death ; that when the ' Maidens ' of Macleod (certain well-known rocks on the coast of Macleod's country) became the property of a Campbell ; when a fox had young ones in one of the turrets of the Castle, and particularly when the fairy-enchanted banner should be for the last time exhibited,—then the glory of the Macleod family should depart ; a great part of the estate should be sold to others ; so that a small *curragh* (a boat) would carry all the gentlemen of the name of Macleod across Loch Dunvegan ; but that in times far distant another John Breac should arise, who should redeem those estates, and raise the power and honours of the house to a higher pitch than ever. Such in general terms was the prophecy. And now as to the curious coincidence of its fulfilment.

There was at that time, at Dunvegan, an English smith, with whom I became a favourite, and who told me, in solemn secrecy, that the iron chest which contained the ' fairy flag ' was to be forced open next morning ; that he had arranged with Mr Hector Macdonald Buchanan to be there with his tools for that purpose.

I was most anxious to be present, and I asked permission to that effect of Mr Buchanan (Macleod's man of business), who granted me leave on condition that I should not inform any one of the name of Macleod that such was intended, and should keep it a profound secret from the chief. This I promised, and most faithfully acted on. Next morning we proceeded to the chamber in the East Turret, where

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was the iron chest that contained the famous flag, about which there is an interesting tradition.

With great violence the smith tore open the lid of this iron chest; but, in doing so, a key was found under part of the covering, which would have opened the chest, had it been found in time. There was an inner case, in which was found the flag, enclosed in a wooden box of strongly scented wood. The flag consisted of a square piece of very rich silk, with crosses wrought with gold thread, and several elf-spots stitched with great care on different parts of it.

On this occasion the melancholy news of the death of the young and promising heir of Macleod reached the Castle. 'Norman, the third Norman,' was a lieutenant of H.M.S. the *Queen Charlotte*, which was blown up at sea, and he and the rest perished. At the same time, the rocks called 'Macleod's Maidens' were sold, in the course of that very week, to Angus Campbell, of Ensay, and they are still in possession of his grandson. A fox in possession of Lieutenant Maclean, residing in the West Turret of the Castle, had young ones, which I handled, and thus all that was said in the prophecy alluded to was so far fulfilled, although I am glad the family of my chief still enjoy their ancestral possessions, and the worst part of the prophecy accordingly remains unverified. I merely state the facts of the case as they occurred, without expressing any opinion whatever as to the nature of these traditionary legends with which they were connected.

With reference to the last observation of the worthy Doctor it is only necessary to cite the late Alexander Smith, who alludes to this same prophecy in his *Summer in Skye*, to show that the fulfilment of the

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last part of the prediction was not long delayed. He writes :—

Dun Kenneth's prophecy has come to pass. . . . If the last trump had been sounded at the end of the French war no one but a Macleod would have risen out of the churchyard of Dunvegan. If you want to see a chief of the Macleods nowadays you must go to London for him.

We know perfectly well that the whole current of a person's life is frequently changed by the most trivial incident,—in fact, by what apparently is neither more nor less than a mere accident. Can we suppose that such incidents are accidents in reality? If the incidents foretold hundreds of years in advance actually fell out in the minutest detail, though nothing apparently hung on them, and they were merely cited as time indications of a contemporaneous event of importance, how is it possible to believe in the modification in the smallest detail of the foreordained destiny of mankind and the universe? If Napoleon had fallen a victim to the Reign of Terror—and he very nearly did so—the whole subsequent history of the world would have been changed. So it would if he had been captured on his return from his



Egyptian campaign. And he only escaped capture by the skin of his teeth. If predestination rules, it rules in the minutest particular. If there is truth in such prophecies as those of the Brahan Seer, predestination most assuredly does rule. We have been taught to hold that the future is in the foreknowledge of God. How can it be in his foreknowledge if it is uncertain and undetermined? Manifestly it is a contradiction in terms to maintain such a position; and, if we prefer not to use the word 'God' but to talk about the *Anima Mundi*, or the *Soul of Things*, or use any other such phrase, it makes little difference. To admit prophecy is to admit the inevitable. Is to admit the inevitable to deny freewill? Apparently. This, however, depends entirely upon what is meant by freewill.

As a matter of fact, our choice of action depends (subject to the circumstances in which we are placed) on our own characters. We act as we do because our characters are what they are. Had we different characters we should act differently. From our own point of view, therefore, we have freewill as we make our own choice. This, however, is quite in keeping with the supposition, that

from the point of view of a (supposed) omniscient outsider, our actions, under any given circumstances, might be determined with certainty. Character is the mainspring of action. John Jones, in given circumstances does not act like Tom Smith, because he is John Jones; in other words, because his character is his own. Character and circumstance determine the history of the world, and omniscient wisdom can therefore determine the future by knowledge of the past. If it were otherwise we should have to argue that there was some element of causation which had been overlooked which led to a variation of the anticipated consequences. And even by admitting this we allow the force of the whole position, the inevitable sequence of Cause and Effect.

It has been frequently maintained that such a belief must lead to inaction and the apathy engendered by fatalism; but there is no reason for such a result, if the argument is rightly understood. The whole position amounts to this, that we find the mainspring of our actions in character and not in caprice. Would it stimulate my efforts to reflect that being John Jones I

am acting as if I was Tom Smith? Surely the thought that we have our salvation in our own hands by the building up of our own characters is stimulus enough, and no determinist hypothesis denies this. Fate and freewill are only the same truth looked at from two different standpoints, and there is nothing in this truth, rightly understood, which impels to apathy or inaction.

A rather subtle point of metaphysics has been put forward occasionally in explanation of prophecy, and Schopenhauer, among others, is cited in its defence. To put it shortly, the gist of the argument is that time is an illusion, that past, present, and future are in the eye of Omniscience one eternal Now. The entire cinematograph is there all the while, but you only see it piecemeal as it passes in front of you.

No less an authority than Sir Oliver Lodge, has spoken sympathetically of this point of view; but I am disposed to take the position that any justification of prophecy from such an argument is merely based upon loose thinking. Nothing is easier than to talk airily about the Absolute. For argument's

sake, in a world where all things are relative, we must admit in theory the idea of such an Absolute. In a world where all things are conditioned, we must admit the conception of the Unconditioned. In this conception of the Unconditioned there is no room for Time or Space, Positive or Negative, Being or Not-Being. But our own concern is unquestionably with the Relative and the Conditioned. And this is just as true, whether we are speaking of this world or the next, the material plane or the astral plane. To suggest, therefore, that all events are shadowed forth on the astral plane before their occurrence on the material plane may be a perfectly rational hypothesis, but to talk in the same breath of 'events occurring simultaneously in an extended present' is sheer nonsense. If we admit in theory the existence of an Absolute, we can have no possible conception of it. Reason or flights of fancy may carry us in imagination through myriads of conditions—material, astral or spiritual—but we should be no nearer the Absolute in any of these than we are here to-day. It is one of the necessities of Condition and Relativity that events occur in sequence, and this is all we

mean by Time. The sequence of moving pictures on a cinematograph would be just as incongruous in association with the Absolute as Time itself. For the Absolute prohibits alike Time and Space and all conditions whatsoever. Thus to foresee may be to see what happens first on the astral plane and afterwards on the material, or to see what the *Anima Mundi* is in labour with, but it cannot possibly be to see in an extended present. The phrase is meaningless, implying as it does the denial of a sequence which exists and which sequence is part of that law of Cause and Effect which is as much one of the laws of Nature and of Super-nature as that law of Numbers on which Pythagoras asserted that the whole universe was built.

Paracelsus and the ancient occultists attributed the prophetic gift to the *Evestrum* or *Trarames*, the *Evestrum* apparently corresponding to the astral body of theosophical parlance. The celebrated Swiss doctor has some detailed observations on this subject in his *Philosophia ad Athenienses*,\* which, what-

\* See *Paracelsus*, by Dr Franz Hartmann, pp. 73-5. London : Kegan Paul, Trench & Co.

ever view we may take of them from the standpoint of Twentieth Century science, have at least the merit of being curious and interesting, and may thus form a fitting termination to my rather extended observations on this abstruse subject :—

Everything has an *Evestrum*, and it is like a shadow seen upon a wall. The *Evestrum* comes into existence and grows with the body, and remains with it as long as a particle of the matter composing the latter exists. The *Evestrum* originates contemporaneously with the first birth of each form, and everything, whether it be visible or invisible, whether it belongs to the realm of matter or to the realm of the soul, has its *Evestrum*; but *Trarames* means an invisible power that begins to be able to manifest itself at a time when the senses of the inner perception become developed. The *Evestrum* indicates future events by causing visions and apparitions, but *Trarames* causes an exaltation of the senses. Only those who are gifted with great wisdom may understand the true nature of *Evestrum* and *Trarames*. The *Evestrum* influences the sense of sight; *Trarames* the sense of hearing. The *Evestrum* causes dreams foreshadowing future events. Whenever a child is born, there is born with him an *Evestrum*, which is so constituted as to be able to indicate in advance all the future acts and the events in the life of the individual to which it belongs. If that individual is about to die, his *Evestrum* may indicate the approach of his death by raps or knocks, audible to all, or by some other unusual noise, by the movement of furniture, the stopping of clocks, the breaking of a picture, the fall of a mirror, or any other omen; but frequently

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such omens are neither recognised nor noticed, nor even understood. The *Trames* produces manifestations of a more subjective character, and may speak to a person in a way that is audible to him, but inaudible to others.

The *Evestra* originate in the *Turba Magna*, the collective activity of the universe. The *Evestra Prophetica* proceed directly from the *Turba Magna*; the *Evestra Obumbrata* come into existence at the time when the forms to which they belong appear. The *Evestra Prophetica* are the harbingers of great events that may concern the well-being of the world. If some such important event is to take place, they will be the forerunners to announce it to the world, so that mankind may be prepared for it, and a person who understands the true nature of such an *Evestrum* is a seer and a prophet.

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ONE of the greatest assets a world religion can possess is antiquity. People will readily believe in the record of an incident two thousand years old, the possibility of the occurrence of which within recent times they would ridicule unhesitatingly. *Credo quia absurdum* was Tertullian's famous but truly idiotic phrase. *Credo quia antiquum* is a phrase one might put quite justly into the mouths of most latter-day Christians. The average Christian accepts Christianity because it comes to him with all the wealth and richness of tradition and appeals to many of the best of those conservative instincts which we all of us possess, by whatever name we may call ourselves or under whatever banner we may fight. I am far from saying that the appeal of Christianity does not go infinitely farther than this. But do we most

\* I must acknowledge my great indebtedness for information utilized in this essay to Gaetano Negri's *Life of Julian the Apostate*, an English edition of which has been published by Mr T. Fisher Unwin.



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of us realise how much this alone counts for? It is the atmosphere that surrounds us all, it is the medium through which we sense our perceptions. Even though we have adopted the conclusions of Spencer and of Darwin we still *think* in terms of Christianity.

Immeasurably different was the position when Julian, surnamed by his enemies the Apostate, assumed the imperial purple. It was but a generation before that Constantine the Great had held out the hand of fellowship to the jarring Christian sects and made a desperate but at the same time unsuccessful attempt to induce them to compose their differences. Christianity was the youngest of the creeds, a new-comer among the religions of the world. Though the broad lines of the moral teaching of its Founder were undoubted, the belief in the nature of that Founder's mission varied indefinitely, according to the particular teacher or congregation of disciples. Such as its metaphysics were, they involved the adoption of a bastard form of Neoplatonism which to the learned and the philosophical must have appeared palpably ridiculous. Its acceptance implied the belief in miracles of so staggering a nature that in view of their comparatively recent occurrence,

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even in so unscientific an age it was mainly relegated to the least educated of the people. Its votaries heaped scorn upon all the classic literature of the day as savouring of devil-worship and idolatry, and its opponents retorted by describing it as the religion of 'the kitchen.' While, however, the bishops talked incomprehensible metaphysics, the common people drank in greedily the teaching of one who regarded all mankind as brothers, and felt a new rush of life in their veins as they realised, whatever the humility of their social rank, that

. . . King and slave,  
Soldier and anchorite,  
Distinctions men esteemed so grave  
Were nothing in his sight.

This Son of God—precisely what the expression might mean was a moot point with the early Christians—had abandoned his life of celestial bliss and come down to earth disguised as a carpenter and a carpenter's son. After this what throne was nobler than the stool of the ordinary artisan? This mental attitude, more than anything else, is the clue to the rapid growth of Christianity during the first three centuries of our era; this and the early spade work, energetically

followed up afterwards, of that great organiser, Saul of Taurus.

It may be said with a measure of truth that great world movements only triumph through silently dropping their most salient characteristics. It was so unquestionably with Christianity. Christianity as taught by Christ could never have become the Religion of the Roman Empire. Its official recognition by Constantine as the State religion implied the negation of the saying of Christ, 'My kingdom is not of this world.' Already a most formidable organisation, the Emperor must reckon with it as friend or foe. Constantine's alliance with the Church was a momentous move in State policy, fraught with the gravest consequences both for good and evil. Thenceforth for many centuries the rulers of Europe would have to reckon with an *imperium in imperio*, the temporal power of the Church Militant. On the other hand the Church of Christ was bound to lose in the process its early idyllic charm. 'In morals it was descending from the serene heights of the Gospel and of primitive Christianity and was leaning towards Stoicism; in philosophy it was constructing a great theological edifice of a

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quasi-metaphysical character ; in worship its ceremonies were being modelled on those of the Mysteries.' But above all things it was a strong and disciplined organisation, therein presenting a great contrast to Paganism, whose different cults had neither homogeneity nor interdependence. In spite of discords and dissensions the solidity of the ecclesiastical organisation remained essentially unimpaired. Constantine had commenced his reign by a general edict of toleration, putting all religions on an equal footing, but he soon came to the conclusion that the welfare of the State was bound up with the recognition of one religion in which all should acquiesce. His last words to his son Constantius embody the mature conclusions of a lifetime. 'You will not enjoy the empire unless you make God adored by all in the same manner.' What this manner was appeared to him, comparatively speaking, immaterial, but having thrown in his lot with the Christians, as being the most serious body he had to reckon with, his aim thenceforward was to do all in his power to compose their many and grave differences. And so it has come about that Constantine the Great, murderer and Trinity-manufacturer, has gone down to

posterity with a halo round his head as the first Christian Emperor of Rome.

As must inevitably have been the case at this early date the Trinitarian idea and the assumed relation of Jesus Christ to the other two persons of the Trinity was far from having crystallised into definitely accepted dogma, and still remained in the minds of most Christians themselves in a very fluidic state. By the middle of the fourth century, however, two Christian sects had succeeded in forcing themselves more prominently before the public eye than any others, and these two were severally enrolled under the respective banners of Arius and Athanasius, both originally presbyters together under Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria.

Before explaining the essential differences between the doctrines held in these rival camps, it may be well to retrace the development of Christianity from a somewhat earlier date.

In Hebraic tradition the Messiah was a human personage destined to restore to Israel its ancient power and prosperity. Something of this idea still clung around the early Christian assemblies and was associated by them with a 'second coming' of Jesus Christ,

which they looked for in the near future. The idea that Christ was in an especial sense the Son of God was doubtless accepted by them, but the notion that He was the Second Person of the Trinity was an idea quite foreign to the early Church and which grew up gradually through the constant association between Christians and Gnostic metaphysicians in that World's Fair of religions and philosophies, the Alexandria of the first century of the Christian era. Anything more the poles asunder than the simplicity of the moral teachings of Jesus Christ and the subtlety of the metaphysics of Alexandria can scarcely be imagined. Quite apart, however, from the difference of mental attitude, Christ inculcated the observance of certain rules of conduct and a mode of life founded upon a high ideal of duty and self-sacrifice, while the metaphysicians of Alexandria concerned themselves mainly with explaining the meaning and origin of the universe. Fate, however, in its irony ordained that the two should be welded into one and that the 'Logos' of the Alexandrian metaphysicians should be deposed in favour of the Hebrew Messiah. This 'Logos' (entirely symbolic in its character) never was or could have

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been incarnate in human shape and the bare idea of such a conception argues a total failure on the part of the Christian bishops to comprehend the abstruse Alexandrian philosophy. The Christian Trinity was thus founded on a misconception. Misconception, however, as it was, it led the Church into a position of embarrassment from which there was no escape but an audacious mystification and play upon words. Christianity had at its base the old Hebrew idea of the unity of the Deity. If, however, Christ were God and, as some maintained, equal with the Father, this unity obviously disappeared. Hence arose contending sects, culminating in the strife which has immortalized the names of Arius and Athanasius. The protest against this division of the Godhead took the form of a doctrine called at the time Monarchianism, the adherents of which divided themselves into two schools, labelled respectively dynamistic and modalistic Monarchianism. The latter school believed in the incarnation of the Father Himself, considering Christ as a *mode* or means of revelation of the One God. The former school, which was represented in the second part of the third century by Paul of Samosata,

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Bishop of Antioch, affirmed the essential humanity of Jesus, but maintained that he was infused by the direct inspiration or *dynamic* force of God.

From this dynamic Monarchianism sprung Arianism, though the Arian heresy (so-called) accorded a somewhat higher position to Christ, who appeared in it as the first creature created by God out of nothingness and as intermediary between God and man. 'If,' maintained Arius, with some show of reason, 'the Father generated the Son, the generated had a beginning of existence. From this it is manifest there was a time in which the Son did not exist; and necessarily he must have been created out of nothing.' God alone, he maintained, who had become Father by the production of the Son, had not been generated, being alone and inorganic and having his being in himself. Arius refused to identify Christ with the Logos because the Logos or Word (or Wisdom) of God constituted an inherent part of God's essence.

In opposition to Arius, the Athanasians claimed that the Son (or Logos) is in the bosom of the Father, and as the Creator of everything could not Himself be created of nothing. Father and Son they declared had



an absolute unity. The relation by which the Son is in one respect distinct from the Father and in another one with Him in essence is explained by the generation of the Son by the Father, implying, indeed, a derivation of one from the other, but such a derivation as is beyond all conception in time.

The Council of Nicaea was called by the Emperor Constantine with the view of calming these discords and disputations which were making Christianity the laughing-stock of the world. But in spite of his efforts, Constantine was not destined to see peace restored to the Church, the compromise that he had forced upon the disputants being repudiated by the Arian section. He died and bequeathed a legacy of discord to his sons Constantius and Constans, the former of whom openly favoured the Arian 'heresy.' The death of Constans subsequently reunited the empire under the sole rule of Constantius, who, after the holding of innumerable councils which led to nothing, finally imposed upon the Church a formulated dogma of his own and exiled the bishops who protested against it.

This was the state of affairs ecclesiastical

when Julian assumed the reins of government and made that memorable attempt to restore Paganism which won for him the title that has clung to him for sixteen hundred years of 'Julian the Apostate.'

The upbringing of Julian had not been such as to dispose him sympathetically towards the new religion. His relatives who had espoused the Christian cause had been remarkable, even in an age when vice and cruelty were rampant, for the criminality of their lives. Constantine had murdered his wife and his son Crispus. His sons initiated their reigns by the extermination of their relatives. Of these victims of imperial bloodthirstiness Julius Constantius, the father of Julian, was one, and his eldest brother subsequently paid a similar penalty for his consanguinity to a Christian emperor. His own life was constantly in danger, and when at length he perished in the ill-fated Persian campaign, his death was commonly attributed to the javelin of an ecclesiastical zealot in his own army, a charge which the Fathers of the Church carefully refrained from repudiating. At the same time the Church itself had scarcely become the object of imperial solicitude when the debasing

effects of the patronage of the social and political world began to make themselves apparent. Ammianus Marcellinus, a friend of Julian, draws a picture of the bishops of his day 'enriched by the gifts of the matrons, driving round the streets seated in coaches ; magnificently dressed, and lovers of abundant banquets, surpassing those of the imperial table.' Julian's early experiences, while they created in his mind a natural repulsion to Christianity, were seconded in a more positive sense by his long sojourn during the susceptible years of his boyhood in Nicomedia, the chief centre of Hellenism, where he read eagerly, if he did not attend, the lectures of Libanius, the greatest rhetorician of the day and a shining light of the Hellenistic party. To this influence was added that of the Neoplatonic philosophers Edesius, Chrysanthius, Eusebius and Maximus, the inheritors of the traditions of Plotinus and Porphyry, with whose mystical ideas with regard to the meaning and origin of the Cosmos the world of Greek thought had become so thoroughly saturated.

Alike to the lover of Greek literature and to the student of the metaphysics of the Neoplatonic philosophers the headway made

by the Christian Church appeared in the light of a barbaric wave of ignorance and superstition calculated to overwhelm, if it was not swept back, the entire intellectual as well as all the higher spiritual life of the time. The feeling of undisguised contempt with which the subtle mind of the Greek thinkers regarded the crude theological disquisitions of the shepherds of the Christian flock was thus mingled with a sense of very real apprehension lest the treasures of classic literature and philosophy should perish in one universal intellectual deluge. That such a danger seemed at one time imminent there is no doubt, and Julian's attitude and conduct, as well as his own express statements, showed again and again that he was influenced by the anticipation of such an impending catastrophe. To those who associate in their minds the period of the classical renaissance with the most halcyon days of the Church's history such fears may appear strange. But it must not be forgotten that the tendencies of the Christianity of these times were intensely iconoclastic, and that all pagan literature, *i.e.*, all the classic works of Greece and Rome, were suspect by the Church as tainted with devil-worship

and impiety towards the one true God. The Hellenic spirit was further fostered in Julian by a brief sojourn at Athens, whence he was summoned by his cousin Constantius to become his coadjutor in the government of the empire and to assume the chlamys of Cæsar as heir-presumptive to the imperial purple. No wonder that all those who looked for the salvation of the empire by the re-establishment of the old order of things centred their hopes of the moral and political rejuvenation of an effete empire in the ardent boy with the passionate love of Greek literature, Greek ideals and the Greek spirit. 'From the lips of every honest thinker,' Libanius declares, 'arose the prayer that this youth might become the master of the universe, stay the ruin of the world and help the suffering, as he knew how to cure their ills.' Later when he was acclaimed at Vienna, at the inception of his arduous and successful Gallic campaigns, it is related by Ammianus that a blind old woman asked who it was the populace were saluting. When told it was Cæsar Julian, 'Behold,' she exclaimed, 'him who will restore again the temples of the gods!' Julian, in short, was looked to by his contemporaries as the

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man of destiny, the 'fated hand' who would restore the ancient lustre of the Roman Commonwealth as it was in its palmyest days.

The peace which Constantius had imposed upon the Church by exiling all the bishops who did not subscribe to the diluted Arianism which he had earmarked as the only genuine brand of Christianity was not destined to endure. Had another Arian emperor succeeded him and reigned as long as his predecessor it is indeed more than probable that this version of the Christian faith would have been the one handed down as orthodox to the succeeding centuries. Fate, however, ordained otherwise, thereby, as it finally proved, playing into the hands of the Athanasian party. But, in the first instance, the accession of Julian meant the renewal of the earlier policy of Constantine the Great as expressed in the Edict of Milan, which gave equal rights to all churches and forms of religion, with this difference, that the Emperor's avowed sympathies were with the traditional forms of pagan worship interpreted symbolically in the light of the Neoplatonic philosophy. The old Roman spirit of patriotism and the old Roman ideals of duty and good citizenship were bound up

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with the rites and observances of this now antiquated form of polytheism. Julian apprehended that if he could infuse these forms with the new spirit of a living faith, it might still be possible for the old religion to hold its own against the advancing tide of Christianity, the dissolving influence of which upon the bands that held together the social structure of the Roman Empire he all too clearly divined.

The immediate result of Julian's action was to bring flocking back to their dioceses all the bishops who had not *kowtowed* to the Arian formula of Constantius, and, as Julian himself doubtless anticipated, before many weeks had elapsed a sort of religious civil war had broken out in the Christian camp. The situation was further complicated by the fact that the protecting arm of the law was now extended to those who practised the old religion. The sacking of pagan temples was sternly repressed, and in cases of spoliation restitution was insisted upon. The Emperor's love of even-handed justice was, as may be supposed, by no means to the liking of those Christian congregations who had grown fat by pillaging the property of pagan temples or of other Christian sects that were for the

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moment out of favour. Religious riots broke out in various places. Julian complains in an address to the inhabitants of Bostra where one of these disturbances took place :—

‘I believe that the chiefs of the Galileans should feel a greater thankfulness to me than to him who preceded me in the government of the Empire. For, while he reigned, many of them were exiled, persecuted and imprisoned, and whole multitudes of so-called heretics were murdered, so that in Samosata, Cyzicus, in Paphlagonia, Bithynia, and Galatia, and many other places, entire villages were destroyed from their foundations. Now, under my rule, just the opposite has happened. The exiled have been recalled, and by means of a law, those whose goods had been confiscated, received them back. Yet they have arrived at such a pitch of fury and stupidity that from the moment they were no longer permitted to tyrannize, nor to continue the strife among themselves, nor to oppress the worshippers of the Gods, inflamed with anger, they began to hurl stones and dared to stir up the rabble and make riots, impious in their actions towards the Gods and rebellious to our decrees, notwithstanding their extreme benevolence. . . . I have, therefore, decided to proclaim and render manifest to all by means of this decree the duty of not assisting the clergy in causing riots, and not permitting themselves to be persuaded to throw stones and disobey the magistrates. Otherwise, all are allowed to assemble together as often as they wish, and to make such prayers as they think fit. . . .’

Elsewhere he says :—

‘I have rendered the Church of the Galileans incontestable services. I have recalled the exiled,



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given back confiscated property and sought to put an end to the violence by which it was rent asunder. And, instead of finding gratitude, I have reaped the result of being hated by all without distinction, and more than my predecessor, who fiercely persecuted one half of the Church for the benefit of the other. But this arises from the fact that peace and reciprocal respects are not desired by the heads of the Church, as they only care for impunity in their abuse of power and deceit. My system of government, which imposes order and toleration of opinions and beliefs and absolute obedience to the laws, is distasteful to those who thus find their hands tied. . . .'

The extreme brevity of Julian's reign makes the probable success of his policy, had it been persevered in long enough to give it a fair trial, purely a matter of conjecture. What, however, we may assert with some confidence is that the old pagan forms of worship had too completely lost their hold on the faith of the people to make their rehabilitation possible. The attempt to fill the old bottles of Polytheism with the new wine of Neoplatonism was bound to fail. The Neoplatonic ideals were too far above the heads of the rank and file for them to be grasped and appreciated except in isolated instances. Nor was there any very obvious connecting link between the two forms of belief, the only excuse for the absorption of one by the other being the desire not to

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break with the past. They were indeed both Greek or presumably Greek in origin, but whereas one represented the oldest Greek tradition, the other was the subtlest and most sublimated outcome of the latest forms of Greek metaphysical speculation. Christianity, on the other hand, appealed to the heart and to the emotions—in short, to the common heritage of all humanity. The bishops and pastors of the flock might squabble over questions of doctrine and their ‘tangled Trinities,’ but that which kept Christianity alive in the hearts of men was the humanity of Christ and not his Godhead. If, however, Julian was bound to fail in his attempt to restore the worship of the Greeks and Romans to its ancient position and honour—and evidence that his attempt was a failure had already begun to accumulate even in the short months of his reign—it is by no means equally certain that failure was bound to attend his determination to give Christianity a fair field and no favour, and to set himself sternly against any identification of ecclesiasticism with established authority. That the earlier policy of Constantine was better than the later one no sane thinker can doubt. The only true

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position was for the State to stand aloof and administer 'indifferent' justice to all religions and sects alike. If this idea had once taken root it might well have become recognised by later generations as one of the established canons of State policy. The gain this would have been to the human race is so enormous that it is quite impossible to estimate it.

Constantine's dying words to his son, already quoted, 'You will not enjoy the empire unless you make God adored by all in the same manner,' became the text and motto of all Christian rulers, and led to the shedding of more innocent blood in the name of Christianity than any other recorded sentence in history. A murderer in his lifetime, his last words perpetuated a tradition of bloodshed which it took 1,500 years finally to extinguish. Perhaps, however, looked at from the highest point of view, the loss of life in the countless persecutions and wars of the Church was a trivial matter compared with the loss of knowledge and intellectual advancement which ecclesiastical tyranny inevitably involved. The slavery of the mind is admittedly the worst form of slavery, and the tradition of the infallibility of the Church spelt the dwarfing of the intellects

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of countless millions of human beings and the setting back of the clock of human progress by a full thousand years. If we take this view, we shall look upon Julian's ill-fated Persian campaign not as Gregory Nazianzen did, and other of the Christian Fathers, as a divine retribution on the man who had been impious enough to defy the Christian God, but as an irreparable disaster to the entire human race, and shall turn thankfully from the spiteful vapouring of this venomous ecclesiastic to the noble lament of Julian's friend Libanius over him whom the gods loved, but loved alas! too well:—

All of us weep, each one the loss of his particular hopes; the philosopher over the man who explained the doctrines of Plato; the rhetorician over the orator eloquent of speech and skilful in criticising the discourses of others; the pleaders over a judge wiser than Rhadamanthus. O, unfortunate peasants, who will be the prey of those whose sole object is to despoil you! O, power of justice already weakened, and of which soon there will only remain the shadow! O magistrates, how much will the dignity of your names be reviled! O, battalions of soldiers, you have lost an emperor who in war provided for all your necessities! O, laws, rightly believed to have been dictated by Apollo, now trodden under foot! O, reason, thou hast almost in the same moment acquired and lost thy sway and vigour. Alas! for the earth's absolute ruin!

Julian died at the age of thirty-two.

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Few men have crowded so much activity into so short a life, yet none have spoken in terms of greater admiration of the life of philosophy and contemplation. What Julian wrote was frequently written in his soldier's tent in moments snatched from his night's sleep after the turmoil of the day, and was rather written as an outlet for his emotions than intended for the world's eye. Such as it is, however, it throws a remarkable light on the character of the writer. A conservative by temperament, his zeal for justice and pure administration in an age of violence made him a born reformer. He combined the traditional virtues of the best of the old Romans—their austerity, simplicity and probity—with a passionate love for Greek literature, Greek philosophy and Greek ideals. It is this strain of the old Roman in Julian which explains his desire—a desire which has puzzled so many of his biographers—to perpetuate the ancient pagan rites which were once so closely interweaved with a Roman's home and a Roman's ideal of duty. A friend who knew him well thus describes his personal appearance: 'He was of middle height, with soft fine hair, a bushy

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pointed beard, beautifully bright and flashing eyes which bespoke the subtlety of his mind; fine eyebrows, a very straight nose, a rather large mouth with full lower lip, a thick arched neck, large broad shoulders, a frame compact from head to finger tips, whence arose his great physical strength and agility.'

In religion, as has been already intimated, Julian was a mystic of the mystics. He drank in greedily the theosophical doctrines of the leading Neoplatonists of the day, and Porphyry and Plotinus were among his favourite authors. He recognized that here if anywhere was to be found the essence of true spiritual religion, and not in the dogmas of any sect or in the anthropomorphic superstitions of his own or any other age. He avowed his own personal belief in a life after death, but spoke of this subject as one on which every man must form his own opinion for himself, as there was no conclusive evidence with regard to it. It is curious that after more than fifteen hundred years the religious attitude of Julian is once more finding favour with the most advanced intellects of the age minus that sympathy with pagan rites and ceremonies which arose

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from the accident of his date of birth and his conservative leaning to the great traditions of the halcyon days of the old Roman Commonwealth.

The name of 'Apostate' given him by the fathers of the Church has still clung to Julian, and perhaps it is after all not without appropriateness, if it may be held to describe one who 'stood aloof' from the tyranny of ecclesiasticism, and who turned away from the paths of violence and corruption in which his predecessors had walked, to choose the nobler ambition of administering even-handed justice to all, without respect of creeds or persons.

## MYSTICAL CHRISTIANITY

WHAT think ye of Christ? Whose Son was he? Was he Jesus the son of Mary and the carpenter Joseph? or is He Christ the Logos, the Son of the Eternal Father and the Holy Spirit? This problem is raised—not, I admit, in these words, but raised in essence—by a remarkable article in a recent issue of the *Hibbert Journal*, entitled ‘The Collapse of Liberal Christianity,’ by the Rev. R. C. Anderson, D.D., minister of the Ward Congregational Church of Dundee.

It is indeed no new problem. It was the theme of the New Gospel of Interpretation embodied in that very remarkable book the *Perfect Way*, by Edward Maitland and Anna Bonus Kingsford. But it is certainly a novel experience to hear the doctrine of this New Gospel stated so clearly, so forcibly and so categorically by a prominent minister of any Christian sect. The article is no fresh



sidelight on the meaning of the Christian's Faith. It goes to the very basis of the root-meaning of Christianity itself. If it disputes the historical basis—as it undoubtedly does—of the Catholicism of the last two thousand years, it is at the same time a challenge of open defiance to the New Theology. This, at all events, in the author's opinion, is not merely an attenuated form of Christianity. It is in no true sense Christianity at all. Its position is rotten and evidentially untenable. It is a house built upon shifting sand.

Liberal Christianity, so called, has thought to fortify its position by stripping Christianity and the Bible-story of their incredible elements and by offering the residue as a rationalised gospel for the benefit of a later generation for which the old Gospel story, in the new light of modern science, has become altogether too 'tall.' The New Theology has substituted Jesus, the great moral Reformer and Teacher, for Christ, the Son of God, the Word of the Eternal Father, and offers the high moral ideals of the Sermon on the Mount as an excellent substitute for the Christian religion. Having eliminated the miracles, the doctrine of the

Trinity, of the Incarnation, Atonement and Resurrection, it serves up to the enlightened palate of the modern man the so-called historical portrait of Jesus, the great Example of Humanity made perfect, as an admirable stimulus to the cultivation of virtue and the observance generally of the moral code.

The author of the article traverses two points. He contends first that the moral code as preached—if it ever was preached—in the Sermon on the Mount, is a high moral code pure and simple, and not a religion in any sense—Christian or other—and secondly, that the portrait of the teacher of this code is in no sense an historical portrait at all, that the elimination of the miracles and the grosser improbabilities from the Bible-story does not confer on the remainder an evidential value which it did not previously possess, that, in short, the incredible parts of the story, if they *are* incredible, are of the essence of the narrative, and that the portrait of Jesus presented by Renan, and presented again with some variation by R. J. Campbell and others, is not a genuine portrait at all—that it is merely legend—and, worse still, legend emasculated.

I must confess I think that the position Dr Anderson takes up in this matter is a strong one. The historical darkness in which the period alleged to be that of the Gospel narratives is shrouded has so far never been satisfactorily penetrated.

Of all evidence on this exceedingly obscure subject probably the Epistles of St Paul are the most valuable, as bearing (some of them at any rate) internal evidence of their own authenticity. What then is the attitude of Paul the Apostle to the Gospel-narrative? It is not too much to say that he practically ignores it. He should, one would have thought, have known all about the sayings and doings of Jesus from first-hand information obtained from the other apostles. Apparently he knows nothing. His allusions to Christ read like allusions to a quasi-legendary personality or to a religious ideal. In no sense do they give the impression of being allusions to one who was practically a contemporary.

Assume (says Dr Anderson) the historicity of Paul and the genuineness of his Epistles and then consider the contentions in which the great Apostle was engaged. He argued for the freedom of the spirit as opposed to the bondage of the letter. Would not his cause have been authoritatively and

finally decided in his favour had he quoted Jesus as saying, 'The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath?' He carried the gospel to the Gentiles and by doing so created modern Christianity. Would he not have effectually silenced his Judaising cavillers if he had quoted the great Johannine saying, 'Other sheep I have, which are not of this flock: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and they shall become one flock, one shepherd?' Why did he not quote them?

There is no disguising the fact that St Paul's doctrine of Christ is throughout a mystical one. It is obvious from his epistles that he has no knowledge of the Bible-story as we know it, nor of Jesus, the man, as he is portrayed in that story.\* Dr Anderson takes the view that these facts 'compel the conclusions (1) that the simple Jesus of

\* A curious (rather than credible) theory is enunciated with regard to the Crucifixion by Solomon Reinach (*Orpheus—a General History of Religions*):

'The circumstances of the Passion (he observes) bear a most suspicious resemblance to rites that were in use at a much earlier period at certain festivals. At the so-called feast of the Sacoëa in Babylonia and Persia, there was a triumphal procession of a condemned criminal dressed as a king; at the end of the festival he was stripped of his fine raiment, scourged, hanged, or crucified. We know from Philo that the populace of Alexandria gave the name Karabas to one of these improvised kings who was overwhelmed with mock honours and afterwards ill-treated. But Karabas has no meaning, either in Aramaic

liberal theory did not then exist,\* and (2) that the creative sayings of the Gospels had not then crystallised round a Jesus nucleus. He then proceeds to enunciate in outline the allegorical interpretation of Christianity to which I have already alluded as expounded in the pages of *The Perfect Way*. But in introducing his thesis he prefaces it with some very pertinent remarks about the religious position generally in the Roman world of that time which seem to me to be very helpful and suggestive to those who wish to understand more clearly the vexed question of the origins of early Christianity.

or Greek. It must be amended to read Barabbas, which means in Aramaic, 'Son of the Father.' . . In addition to all this, we learn that about the year 250 Origen read in a very ancient manuscript of St Matthew's Gospel that Barabbas was called *Jesus Barabbas*. By comparing these various statements, we are led to the conclusion that Jesus was put to death not *instead* of Barabbas, but *in the character* of a Barabbas. The Evangelists neither understood the ceremony they described nor the nature of the derisive honours bestowed on Jesus; they made a myth of what was probably a rite.'

\* A case has been made out for the theory that the Talmud date (about 100 B.C.) is right and that the original of the Jesus of the Gospels, in so far as there was one, lived at an earlier period than is generally believed. But I confess that the difficulties in the way of refusing to accept the main outline of the Gospel narrative seem to me insurmountable.

Christianity, he premises, was not 'founded' by any single historical personage, but was the synthesis of the factors that controlled the historical development of the time. It was 'no new thing in the world,' but rather the result of a gradual moral and intellectual advance and evolution which had been taking place simultaneously on somewhat different lines in Greece, Rome and Judæa.

It is (he says) of little purpose to discard the ordinary supernaturalism of the Church if Jesus be left uniquely perfect. We might as well say that he was virgin-born and spent his life working miracles. . . . The Jesus of liberal theology, whom it pictures as the ideal Man, the Founder of Christianity, is no more historical than is the Christ of the Church. . . . The same motive that placed a Garden of Eden at the beginning of man's life on earth places an ideal man at the opening of the Christian development.

If the story of the Garden of Eden in Genesis be an allegory, by the same token the Gospel-narrative is an allegory also. Dr Anderson's hypothesis, then, is that Christianity began, not with a Jesus (a teacher), whom the early Christians were endeavouring to imitate, but with a Christ whom they worshipped. He shows that such a cult or community was no uncommon thing in the Græco-Roman world. The bond that united the members

of these cults was a vow of service to a certain god or hero. 'One would be organised under the Saviour-God, Zeus-Soter, as its patron, and the members called Soteriastæ; another under Hercules, others under Dionysos, Sarapis, etc.'

When (says our author, offering it seems to me a most illuminating sidelight) we read such an invitation as the following, written on papyri found at Oxyrhynchus, dating from the second century, light is thrown on the New Testament use of the term Lord as applied to Christ.

'Chairemon invites you to dine at the table of the Lord Serapis in the Serapion to-morrow the 15th, at 9 o'clock.'

Or this:

'Antonios, son of Ptolemaios, invites you to dine with him at the table of the Lord Serapis in the house of Claudius Serapion on the 16th at 9 o'clock.'

We see that the relation which the patron God in these communities bore to the individual members was exactly the relation which Christ is represented as bearing to the Primitive Church in the Epistles and Gospels.

Neither Gospels nor Epistles, Dr Anderson argues, if carefully and dispassionately read, give us a human Jesus, but rather a Christ who cannot be described in terms of ordinary humanity. This is most markedly the case in the fourth Gospel, where Christ is described in the very first chapter as 'the

Word who was in the beginning with God and was God,' but it is apparent to a lesser extent even in Mark, admittedly the first Gospel in chronological order.

All this (observes Dr Anderson) accords with the place the name of Jesus would occupy in the Christian communities were they modelled after the other communities of the time, but is inconceivable as the description of a human teacher by those who were endeavouring to follow his instructions.

That the early Christian Church was regarded by contemporaries in this light is shown by the letter of Pliny the Younger to the Emperor Trajan (A.D. 103-5), where he states that the Christians sang antiphons to Christ 'as to a God.' The primitive idea of Christ was thus that of a Divine Being who was worshipped by a particular community or sect, not, as has been contended by the New Theology, that of a human teacher. Liberal Christianity (Dr Anderson contends) in substituting the 'Religion of Jesus' for the 'Gospel of Christ' is a radical departure from the creed of Christendom.

The Christ legend in some shape or form lay at the root of all the ancient mysteries. No story is so widespread as that of the dying and rising God.



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We have already learned that not one feature of the story of Christ that is told in the new Testament is original with it—the angelic annunciation, the virgin birth, the wondrous childhood, the meeting with the Evil Power of the universe face to face in temptation, the going forth to conquer all the evil powers of the world, Christ's being put to death as a sacrifice to the Principle of Evil, the miraculous resurrection, the ascent to heaven, to be speedily followed by His second advent, to reign over living and dead—all this is hundreds, it may be thousands, of years older than Christianity.

Dr Anderson might have cited in addition such incidents as the flight into Egypt and the massacre of the innocents as being common to other and earlier Christ legends. His conclusion that the Christ of Christianity had no human prototype inevitably follows, though he does not go so far as to maintain that Jesus the preacher and teacher was an entirely legendary character. The arguments that this learned divine has adduced would certainly have been a preliminary in most hands to an entire rejection of the whole edifice of Christianity. The point of interest is that the conclusion our author arrives at is, however briefly outlined, in essence identical with that elaborated in so much fuller detail by Kingsford and Maitland—the presentment

of Christianity as a symbolical story of the True Inner Mystical Life of Man.

Dr Anderson observes, 'We do not need a new theology so much as we need a truer interpretation of the theology which from the beginning has been the creed of Christendom.' He continues, adopting unreservedly the whole standpoint of the Christian Mystic :—

The story of the crucifixion, burial and resurrection of Christ is the story of the soul's progress, the story of its triumph over sin and death, repeated in every age of the world's history. . . . It symbolises the idea that is at the root of all religions and seems involved in creation itself—the idea of sacrifice. The law of sacrifice lies at the root of evolution and alone makes it intelligible. This idea is indicated in the New Testament by the phrase *The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*. This sacrifice is *perpetual*; it is the life by which the universe is ever becoming; the individual finding his own highest good in the good of the whole; the realisation of the oneness of the individual with God or the Universal Self.

## THE PERFECT WAY

ALL those to whom the kernel is more than the husk, the spirit than the letter and the truths that underlie all religions than the dogmas of any particular sect, owe a debt of gratitude to the joint authors of the *Perfect Way*, and, secondarily, to the publisher\* who has once more put their work upon the market. However much we may criticise this work in certain of its details, we must admit that in their difficult task of attempting to reconstruct the esoteric doctrine they attained no small measure of success. It is no slight matter that they have interpreted the divine drama of the soul in its pilgrimage and ascent through matter back to spirit, and translated it from the well-nigh incomprehensible jargon of ancient occultism and mysticism into language that comes home to the in-

\* J. M. Watkins, 21, Cecil Court, Charing Cross Road, London, W.C.

telligence of the generality of mankind of the present day.

In a certain sense the original publication of the *Perfect Way* was premature. The interest that it aroused when first it appeared in the year 1881 was slight compared with the effect its appearance would almost certainly have produced if it had seen the light in the first instance at the commencement of the present century. The minds of men are now much more fully prepared for the principles that it enunciates, and if its doctrines may still be said to be 'to the Jews foolishness and to the Gentiles a rock of offence,' the large circle of deep and serious thinkers to whom it makes appeal is widening ever more and more rapidly. It is not, however, so much in the increasing number of the converts to the specific views enunciated, as in that subtle leavening both of religion and science by the principles of exegesis and interpretation that it advocates by which we can gauge the influence it has exerted on the world of modern thought. It is not too much to say that since the publication of this work the whole standpoint of the religion and science of the era in which it was written has been undermined,

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and that for the basic principles on which they were built has been substituted, or is in process of being substituted, something far more nearly akin to the Kingsford-Maitland interpretation than could have seemed possible to its first readers. The world that ridiculed these opinions then is bound to take stock of them now from however sceptical a standpoint, and, admittedly or not, its own views have been greatly modified by their influence.

There is no pretence on the part of the joint authors of the *Perfect Way* of the enunciation of any new religious doctrine or any fresh up-to-date theory of the coming into being of the universe or of individual life. Their doctrine may appear novel to many, but 'the apparently new is not necessarily the really new ; but may be'—and is, it is implied, in this instance, 'a recovery providential, timely and precious, of the old and original which has been forgotten, perverted or suppressed.' While, therefore, the authors propound (as they aver) 'a system of doctrine at once scientific, philosophic and religious and adapted to all the needs and aspirations of mankind,' in substitution for traditional and dogmatic

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conventionalism on the one hand and for agnostic materialism on the other, they do not lay claim to be teaching what has not been taught before, but rather to be interpreting the basic truths common to all religions alike, in the light of the ancient hermetic wisdom.

While accepting the latest discoveries of modern science and the essentials of religion they bring forward the tenets of the initiates and interpret in their light the conclusions of the evolutionists and the dogmas of the orthodox. They find religion and science alike warped by the narrowness and one-sidedness of their respective standpoints. Through this New Gospel of Interpretation they would call back the old truths to redress the balance of the new.

There is always a certain danger in this kind of method. There is the tendency to read everything in the light of the Mystic's own standpoint, to give meanings to passages and records which they were never intended to bear, and to find symbolical interpretations in incidents or in phrases which must needs appear fanciful and far-fetched, if not actually disingenuous, to even the sympathetic reader, and the introduction of which, in con-

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sequence, weakens rather than strengthens the line of argument adopted.

I think the warmest admirers of its talented authors must realise that in *The Perfect Way* they carried this striving after allegorical interpretations quite beyond all legitimate bounds.\* This same tendency is evinced by them in their method of playing with words and names. For the sake of pointing a moral or illustrating their own view-point, they are ready to adopt any derivation, however grotesque, apparently quite oblivious of the ridicule which their lack of the most rudimentary scholarship must bring upon the hypothesis which they are attempting to defend. Tricks of this kind—unedifying and puerile enough—are played with such names as Simon Peter, Janus, Mary, Eve, Isis, and various others. To support a thesis by arguments of this sort might have appealed to the readers of the Epistle to the Hebrews, but nothing could be more fatally calculated to impair the credibility of an author of the present day in the eyes of all his educated contemporaries.

\* For futilities of this kind readers are referred *inter alia* to pp. 45, 46, etc., of the preface to the fourth edition of the *Perfect Way*.

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Having said this much by way of criticism it is only fair to state that Anna Kingsford and Edward Maitland were partners in one of the most remarkable and successful efforts of collaboration that modern literature has witnessed. The style is singularly lucid and the argument, taking into consideration the abstruseness of the subject-matter, is extraordinarily easy to follow.

Following the ancient occultists, the authors take up the position that the substance of the Soul (and therein of all things) and the substance of Deity are one and the same ; since there exists but one substance. The divine substance being in its original condition homogeneous, every monad of it possesses the potentialities of the whole. And it is of this substance projected into lower conditions that the material universe consists. Thus, partaking in essence of the nature of God, each individual is infinitely perfectible, and it was no mere figure of speech that Jesus Christ used when He said, 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect.' He was simply enunciating the ultimate destiny of each monad that fulfils the divine injunction and does not by its own misdeeds forfeit the



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priceless treasure of individuality with all the boundless possibilities it involves. There is no such thing as new creation properly speaking, for as the divine substance is originally one, so also nothing can be added to or withdrawn from it. Each fresh birth which occurs in the lowest modes of organic life is due to the working of the Spirit in the matter concerned and physiologically is the result of 'the convergence of the magnetic poles of the constituent molecules of some protoplasmic entity.' The new condition thus constituted implies a fresh act of individuation, but no addition to the substance already existing. There is no such thing as development in the original substance, but there *is* development of the manifestation of the qualities of that substance in the individual. 'It is because development is directed by conscious and continually experiencing intelligence, which is ever seeking to eliminate the rudimentary and imperfect, that progression occurs in respect of form.'

There is no mode of Matter in which the probability of personality, and therein of man, does not subsist. For every molecule is a mode of the universal consciousness. Without consciousness is no being, for consciousness *is* being.

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The scientists of old discerned in the soul the agent and in mind the efficient cause of all progress, appreciating the fact that to attribute the phenomena of life to the agency of blind force would fail to explain 'the strong set of the current in the direction of beauty and goodness; and the differentiation of uses, functions and kinds not only in cellular tissues, but even in inorganic elements.'

The New Gospel of Interpretation, while neither Christian nor Catholic in the accepted sense, claims to be both one and the other in their original and true sense.

According to the system recovered, the Christ—while equally its beginning, middle and end—is not a mere historical personage, but, above and beyond this, a spiritual Ideal and an Eternal Verity. Recognising fully that which Christ was and did, it sets forth salvation as depending, not on what any man has said or done, but on what God perpetually reveals. For, according to it religion is not a thing of the past or of any one age, but is an ever-present, ever-occurring actuality.

The story of the Christ is the allegory of the upward struggle of every man who rejects the lower for the higher. 'The entire record of the Divine Man of the Gospels was, long before Moses, taught to

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communicants and celebrated in sacraments in numberless colleges of sacred mysteries.' All the leading incidents of the life-history of the Messiah, the incarnation, the Virgin birth, the appearance to the shepherd of the heavenly host, the visit of the wise men, the flight into Egypt, the slaughter of the innocents, the fasting in the wilderness, the crucifixion and ascension have been variously attributed to Osiris, Mithras, Zoroaster, Krishna, Buddha, etc., at dates long antecedent to Christianity.

To be a student of religion, to be a theologian in the true sense it is necessary to have knowledge not of one religion only, but of all religions, not of one sacred book only, but of all sacred books . . . and to apply to these the same critical touchstone as to those. It is truth alone which is valuable. . . . The crucible does not hurt the gold.

On the orthodox doctrine of the Atonement the authors have some very pertinent observations. The idea that an incarnated God by the voluntary sacrifice of Himself could save mankind from the penalty due for their sins, is described as alike derogatory to God and pernicious to man. That from which man requires to be redeemed is not the penalty of sin, but the liability to sin.

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The suffering is the remedial agent. It is well pointed out that if the special object of the incarnation of Christ had been to sacrifice Himself on the cross as a propitiatory sin-offering for the sins of the world, it was a curious thing that no reference to a doctrine so tremendous was ever made by the Victim Himself. So far from that being the case, there is no indication that he attended the Temple sacrifices, nor indeed that he approved of them; much less that he regarded them as designed as types of the death ordained for the Messiah, in His character of Redeemer and Victim.

Priest and Prophet, so far from being depicted in the Bible-narrative as co-operating for the welfare of man, are, indeed, portrayed as in constant antagonism, 'the Priest as the minister of sense perpetually undoing the work performed by the Prophet as minister of the Intuition.'

The Maitland and Kingsford interpretation of the Gospels is throughout typical and allegorical. They are regarded as portraying the inner life of the soul, and such an intellectual position naturally escapes scatheless from the higher criticism. Their object, it is maintained, is not to give an

historical account of the physical life of any man whatever, but to exhibit the spiritual possibilities of humanity at large, as illustrated in a particular and typical example—‘For religion is not in its nature historical . . . but consists in processes, such as Faith and Redemption, which, being interior to all men, subsist irrespectively of what any particular man has at any time suffered or done.’

The Christian mystic of to-day has more than a little in common with the theological standpoint of Anna Kingsford and Edward Maitland.

## RELATION OF CHRISTIANITY TO EARLY GNOSTIC FAITHS

DID Christianity begin with Jesus Christ? The answer seems a fairly obvious one, but is not in reality nearly so obvious as it seems. Most orthodox Christians—and indeed unorthodox ones—will be greatly surprised to learn that it is possible to cite even so notable an authority as St Augustine in the contrary sense. This is what he says:—

That very thing which is now designated the Christian Religion was in existence among the ancients, nor was it absent even from the commencement of the human race up to the time when Christ entered into the flesh, after which true religion, which already existed, began to be called Christian.\*

The similarity of many of the dogmas and practices of Christianity with those of other religions, some dating back to times

\* Quoted by Dr Paul Carus in *The Pleroma*, an essay on the Origins of Christianity. Chicago: the Open Court Publishing Co. London: Kegan Paul & Co. 5s. net.

## CHRISTIANITY AND Gnostic FAITHS

long anterior to Christianity, and others having no apparent connection with that religion, has been the subject of periodical comment from the times of the early Fathers of the Church up to the present date. Thus the French missionary Huc, in his travels in Tibet, was much struck with the resemblance between Tibetan and Christian ritual. He writes :—

The crosier, the mitre, the dalmatic, the cope or *pluvial*, which the Grand Lâmas wear on a journey, or when they perform some ceremony outside the temple, the service with a double choir, psalmody, exorcisms, the censer swinging on five chains, and contrived to be opened and shut at will, benediction by the Lâmas, with the right hand extended over the heads of the faithful, the chaplet, sacerdotal celibacy, Lenten retirements from the world, the worship of saints, fasts, processions, litanies, holy water—these are the points of contact between the Buddhists and ourselves.

Other travellers had been similarly impressed. Father Disderi, who visited Tibet in the year 1714, passed like comments. Fathers Grueber and Dorville travelled from Pekin through Tibet *en route* to India in the year 1661, and were equally astonished at the resemblances they noticed. Among the points they observed may be mentioned the fact that the dress of the Lâmas corresponded

to that handed down in ancient paintings as the dress of the Apostles, that the discipline of the religious orders corresponded to that in the Romish Church, that the idea of the Incarnation and also the belief in Paradise and Purgatory were common to both, that they had prayers for the dead, convents of monks and friars who made vows of poverty, obedience and chastity, that they used holy water, received confessions and gave absolution. These Catholic missionaries even went so far as to conclude from what they saw and heard that the ancient books of the Lâmas contained traces of the Christian religion, which must, they thought, have been preached in Tibet in the time of the Apostles. Victor Jacquemont, the French botanist, who made an expedition from Simla to Tibet, early in the nineteenth century, wrote in the same strain, describing the resemblance as 'really shocking.'

If these similarities are more marked in Tibet than elsewhere, they are certainly not peculiar to that little known country. Professor Lawrence Mills, of Oxford, draws attention to another parallel of a like character in an essay entitled *Our Own*



*Religion in Ancient Persia*, where he observes in proper orthodox fashion that 'it pleased the Divine Power to reveal some of the fundamental articles of our Catholic Creed first to the Zoroastrians, though these ideas later arose spontaneously and independently among the Jews.'

It is noteworthy that in the Zoroastrian religion Mithras, like Christ, is the mediator between God (Ahura Mazda) and man, that he is born of a virgin, and is called 'Righteousness Incarnate.' The Mithraist eucharist is similar to the Christian institution of that name (Justin Martyr, indeed, calls it 'the same'). We are told in the sacred books of Mazdaism that the holy drink, *haoma*, and the consecrated cake, *myazda*, were taken for the purpose of nourishing the resurrection body. It has been suggested that the word *mass* is the same as this Persian *myazda* and also corresponds to the Hebrew *mazza*, the sacred unleavened bread.

But, as is now well known, it is not merely in ceremonial rites and dogmas that Christianity resembles other religions that are generally believed to have had a separate and independent origin, but even

the story of its Founder is discovered to have been anticipated in many of its most remarkable incidents by that of one who lived some 600 years before, viz., the Indian Buddha. If much of this earlier record is to be accounted legend, this fact is far from detracting from the striking nature of the coincidences. Buddha, like Christ, commenced preaching when he was thirty years of age. Previous to his great encounter with Mâra, the tempter, he fasted forty-nine days and nights. Buddha had twelve greater disciples. One of these was called Upathishya (the beloved disciple). Buddha also, like Christ, had a treacherous disciple, Devadatta. Buddha commanded his disciples to love one another 'for by love alone can we conquer wrath,' and added, 'Do to others that which ye would have them do to you. Kill not.' Buddha's comment on the command to 'Commit no adultery,' 'This law is broken by even looking at the wife of another with a lustful mind,' inevitably recalls a similar observation ascribed to Jesus. The following sentiments culled from the sayings of Buddha read like variants from the Gospel record, 'Who is not freed cannot free others.'—'The blind

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cannot guide in the way.'—'As men sow thus shall they reap.'—'Whosoever piously bestows a little water shall receive an ocean in return.'—'Be not weary in well-doing.'—'Give to him that asketh, even though it be but a little.'—'Faith is the first gate of the Law.\*

Certainly these coincidences appear remarkable enough. But what is more extraordinary than any of them is the discovery that we find established at Alexandria in Egypt, at a date prior to the generally accepted date of the teaching of Jesus, a sect of so-called Therapeutæ which was to all intents and purposes a Christian Church. These Therapeutæ are referred to by Philo in his *De Vita Contemplativa* (A.D. 25 or earlier). 'The Therapeuts have been recognised' (says Mr G. R. S. Mead) 'throughout the centuries as identical with the earliest Christian Church in Egypt . . . they were so like the Christians that the Church Fathers regarded them as a model of a Christian Church.' But not only were there Therapeuts in Egypt, there were Essenes,

\* I am indebted for these quotations to a very interesting book published by Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., *India in Primitive Christianity*, by Arthur Lillie.

teaching similar doctrines, and by some even identified with the Therapeuts, in Palestine and elsewhere, who are known to date back to the second century B.C. and probably much earlier. Josephus himself for a time joined one of these Essene communities. Another sect, certainly also pre-Christian in origin and apparently holding very similar tenets, were the Nazarenes, and it is noteworthy that not only is Jesus called a Nazarene (the village of Nazareth is very probably mythical), but St Paul is stated in the Acts to have been denounced as 'a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes.' Apparently till well into the second century A.D., the Christians were generally called simply 'Nazarenes' and identified with the pre-Christian sect. Epiphanius, writing of various heresies, alluded to these Nazarenes, of whom he confesses that he had not great knowledge, but lets slip the curious observation, 'All Christians were at that time in like manner called Nazoroei (Nazarenes).' There existed also at this period various other Gnostic sects such as the Manichæans, Zabians, Ophites, etc., differing in points of importance from the Essenes and Nazarenes, but also having numerous observances in

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common. Thus baptism and some form of the Eucharist were familiar religious rites in the neighbourhood of Palestine itself in immediately pre-Christian times. So also, were priestly celibacy and community of goods among religious sects, as well as establishments for monks and nuns, and notably the Trinitarian idea and the theory of the Logos or Word of the Eternal Father.\* Asia Minor, Syria and Egypt were, in fact, overrun with Gnostic sects during the period immediately preceding the rise of Christianity. Christianity appears to have been an off-shoot of one of these sects—the Nazarenes—which finally overshadowed the others, and then condemned all Gnosticism but its own as heresy. In a noteworthy book called *The Pleroma* or *Fulfilment*, Dr Paul Carus argues that contrary to the generally accepted belief Christianity was of non-Jewish origin. The Gnostics derived their religious opinions from the Farther East and all the essential tenets of Christianity

\* Much of orthodox Judaism and notably the sacrificial ceremonies were an abomination to these early Gnostics, comparatively few of whom could probably boast of anything but a diluted strain of Jewish blood.

(he maintains) point back to Gentile origin. Says Dr Carus :—

Christianity is a religion which originated during the middle of the first century of the Christian era through the missionary activity of the Apostle Paul. He founded the Gentile Church upon the ruins of the ancient pagan religions, and he took his building material, not from the storehouse of the faiths of his Fathers, but from the wreckage of the destroyed temples of the Gentiles.

Judaism was monistic, Christianity dualistic in its character, and this is none the less true because the fact that Judaism was the religion of Jesus rendered inevitable the relationship between the two Creeds. The Christian inherited Jewish Scripture and Jewish traditions, but much of the superstructure built upon them was of pagan or Gentile origin. It was a time when the old faiths of Greece and Rome had broken down. The conquests of Alexander the Great had introduced Eastern religious ideas to Western minds already partially familiar with them through the philosophy of Pythagoras. Later, the Roman legions brought home with them gods from Egypt and from the East, to establish them side by side with their own. Oriental Religions, and Oriental ideas became the fashion in Greek

and in Roman Society, and Eastern and Egyptian Trinities acquired a new meaning through contact with Greek minds and the subtleties of Greek metaphysics. This fusion of the East and West, brought about primarily by the arms of Rome and Macedon, led thus to a corresponding fusion on the emotional-intellectual plane. The great Gnostic movement was the consequence. This movement, while it had its home on the Eastern shores of the Mediterranean, swept in a more or less modified form over the whole Roman Empire. Religions that taught of gods that die to rise again, entered the ancient homes of the gods of Greece and Rome, and seemed by their very presence to sound the death knell of the gods that were dying to rise no more.

In this Gnostic Revival many faiths, most of them having a number of common characteristics, were striving for the mastery. At one time it seemed as if Mithraism, the worship of the sun-god, might triumph. At another Neoplatonism seemed to be carrying all before it. At yet another some evolution of the ancient religion of Egypt appeared likely to assert itself. Everywhere there was a wave of interest and enquiry, a desire

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to probe the secrets of life, and to read a new meaning into existence. Suddenly men became aware that one of the Gnostic sects, having its origin in Palestine, and to all appearance not greatly different from other Gnostic sects around it, was gaining adherents out of all proportion to the others. This was the sect of the Nazarenes or Early Christian Church.

It will now probably be clear how it comes about that correspondences with Christianity are found in so many and such diverse religions. Christianity was indeed the heir to the religious thought of the Pagan world, and, greatly as she is indebted to Judaism, the roots of Christian faith are to be found imbedded not so much in this as in the Gentile faiths of the nations around. Here, not in Judaism, we learn of Trinities and of the Word or Logos, in whose consciousness the phenomenal world took form. Here we read of Saviours—the word is unknown in Hebrew. Here we meet with Eucharists. Here we read of Sons of God who take human form. Here, also, of Gods who die—remain dead for three days—then rise again. Here we meet with mysteries and all those stages of initiation through which Christ was held to have passed, and the



references to which in St Paul's Epistles and especially in the Epistle to the Hebrews\* are legion, though many of them are obscured by the mistranslation of the current version.

The question naturally suggests itself: this being the situation at the time when Christianity first took shape as a definite, independent creed, or rather sect, how came it that, growing up among so many other varieties of religious belief, this particular form of faith eventually succeeded in triumphing over all its numerous rivals, many of whom apparently had far better prospects at the start? The orthodox view is undoubtedly that this was due to the guiding hand of an over-ruling Providence. To those, however, who look at history from the standpoint of reason and common sense, it will be clear that there were certain definite causes which favoured the new sect and gave it a conspicuous advantage over its competitors. It was a case in the Darwinian phrase, of the 'survival of the fittest'; *i.e.*, not necessarily the best, but the most quali-

\* The Epistle to the Hebrews, the authorship of which is in doubt, is a most interesting study in this connection, absolutely teeming, in the original Greek, with references to Initiation Mysteries.

fied to grow and thrive under the then existing conditions. It is obvious that no religion can stand a chance with the masses unless, in the first place, it appeals to the emotions, and unless, in the second place, it does not demand as regards its most essential tenets, any very high degree of intellectual power for their apprehension and acceptance. Both these points were necessarily fatal to such a religion as Neo-Platonism. The Neo-Platonic ideal appealed to the intellect, not to the heart, and it required intellectual powers of unusual acuteness to grasp its conceptions. The simplicity of the life of Jesus Christ and the appeal of his discourses to the man in the street, stood in marked contrast to these deep speculations of the philosophers. The converts to Christianity were gained, not by the Athanasian Creed, but by the contemplation of the pattern of the life of Christ. Furthermore the Christian, through taking over the traditions of Judaism, had the advantage of being able to claim a highly respectable pedigree for his religion. Christianity did not appear as a new fad sprung upon the world. While it appealed, on the one hand, to the rising aspirations of the human race

on the other it joined hands with the earliest records of the world's history. Over and above this, the Christian religion offered no serious obstacles to its proselytes in the way of severe tests or ascetic practices. The practical genius of Paul grasped at once the fact that such rites as circumcision and other stringent Jewish observances, would act as a fatal deterrent to the widespread dissemination of the new gospel, and was prepared to break with his co-workers rather than give way on such a vital point. With the removal of this obstacle, Christianity at once qualified as a religion adapted to the needs of the world at large.

These were undoubtedly all-potent aids to the new creed at its inception, but there was one factor in its favour without which it may safely be maintained that it would never have secured the predominant position which it has long held and still enjoys. Whatever transformations or disguises it subsequently underwent, Christianity in its early days bore the undeniable hall-mark of a democracy of the most uncompromising character. At a time in the world's history when such sentiments had little or no political outlet or safety-valve, all those to

whom the brotherhood of the human race was a precious doctrine found in Christianity the true expression of their ideal. That brilliant Frenchman, Edgar Quinet, in one of his most masterly essays, draws a remarkable parallel between the French Revolution and the rise of Christianity. He points out that alone of all revolutionary movements, this particular one (like Christianity itself) arose and spread, regardless of the natural barriers of countries. The infection of its enthusiasm appealed to Belgians, Germans, Dutch, Italians, with the same force as it did to Frenchmen. Its doctrines disseminated themselves with lightning-like rapidity all over the Continent of Europe, simply because they appealed to man as *man*, and not merely to the hopes, desires, or patriotism of any particular race. So with Christianity, the Cross of Christ was like an ensign held up before all the peoples of the world as a guarantee of present equality, no less than as an earnest of future bliss. In the early days of Christianity it was always noticed—and the fact was a subject of reproach to its votaries—that they were recruited almost exclusively from the ranks of the proletariat. Christi-

anity was recognised to be, without any doubt whatever, the gospel of the poor, as Jesus had declared it. Those were not the days of wealthy Ecclesiastical Establishments or society congregations, and when the politic Constantine adopted it as the religion of the Roman Empire, he well knew that he was making a bold bid for popular applause. All democratic movements—and this is just as true of Christianity as of any others—are invariably in the nature of appeals to the heart rather than to the intellect. It is men like Jesus Christ and like Jean Jacques Rousseau who set the current of the world's opinion; the Voltaires, with all their brilliancy, only 'work for the little public.'

## EARLY CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES

It may serve to make my line of argument somewhat clearer if in taking up again the question of Early Christian Evidences I briefly recapitulate the main points of my last paper. In this I dealt with the various forms of Gnosticism closely resembling Christianity which were in existence about the date of the commencement of the Christian era, and the remarkable similarities existing between Christian precepts, practices, and records, and those of various other non-Christian religions. I also attempted to show why it was that Christianity survived while other contemporaneous religious and philosophical sects passed into oblivion, and in doing so I emphasized the fact that although Christianity derived in one sense directly from Judaism, it was at the same time the heir to the religious thought of the Pagan world.

It has frequently appeared to me a very

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curious phenomenon that writers on the subject of Christianity, and on the subject of the life of the Founder of the Christian religion, while criticizing much of the Bible narrative, and forming their own views as to the relative truth or falsehood of the incidents of that time, as narrated in the Gospels, have been content to draw their picture of the life of Jesus without attempting to show how far they relied for their main facts on historical data, or how far they were merely accepting a selection capriciously chosen, according to their ideas of what seemed most probable or most plausible, from the somewhat contradictory tangle of the Gospel narratives. For those who take up the standpoint of the Higher Criticism it would appear that the first thing to be done should be to establish, as far as possible, reliable data, notably in the matter of the main facts and incidents of the lives of those most immediately concerned in the foundation of Christianity. This, however, at least in the vast majority of cases, the critics have been content simply to take for granted. Renan is perhaps the greatest sinner in this respect. but the rank and file of the erudite German critics are not much better. What for

instance, is the evidence we have got, outside the Bible narrative, to establish the fact that such a person as Jesus Christ ever really existed at all? What, in the second place, is the exact value of the Gospels and Epistles, from the point of view of the historical critic, in support of this assumption? These are points which one would have thought should be dealt with in the very forefront of the discussion, yet in most cases the critics leave them coldly alone.

Now, in order to clear away all misapprehension on the subject, it may be well to state definitely at the commencement of these observations, that, leaving out of account the Bible record, we have no *proof positive* that Jesus Christ ever lived at all, at least at the date given in the Gospel story. Perhaps to some this may not appear a very remarkable fact. They may consider that the lapse of time is so great, and the historical records so deficient, that incidents of however transcendent importance, might well have passed unrecorded in so distant and outlying a corner of the world as Palestine. In this connection, however, it must be borne in mind that wherever Rome held sway, civilization, and the usages of civilization, to a



great extent, prevailed ; that from all the provinces of the Roman Empire, Roman governors, Roman pro-consuls, or rulers subject to Rome, reported regularly to headquarters on all the most important events that took place ; that, in addition to this, there were Jewish historians of repute at the time and immediately afterwards who wrote of Judæa and Jewish affairs. Only to name two prominent instances, there was Philo, who was an absolute contemporary of Jesus Christ, if indeed Jesus lived at the time assigned to him, who wrote of these times, yet had apparently never heard of the Founder of Christianity. There was Josephus, who was born some half a dozen years after the assumed date of the death of Jesus Christ, whose father was therefore his contemporary, and who wrote fully of all matters Jewish, especially those pertaining to Jewish religion and Jewish religious sects, and who was himself for three years of his life a member of one of these mystical sects. Josephus, however, leaving out of account one statement in his writings which is certainly a glaring and palpable forgery, ignores the whole Christian movement altogether, and

this despite the fact that he was at Rome at the period at which St Peter and St Paul were preaching, as stated, each his own version of the Christian doctrine. Who, one may ask, more likely than Josephus, to seize upon the dramatic incidents of this great movement for a study in Jewish religious life and custom?

We are obtaining at the present day, thanks to the indefatigable investigations of our archæologists, corroboration from all quarters, of a number of the most dramatic incidents recorded in the Bible. Who does not remember, even from his earliest years of childhood, reading the Old Testament story of the overthrow of the army of Sennacherib before Jerusalem? Who does not remember reading, if not learning by heart, in the well-known lines of Byron, how—

‘The Assyrian came down like a wolf on the fold’?

Does it not seem strange that of these incidents we have the fullest corroboration, even though the colour of the facts is somewhat modified, from the recovered records of ancient Assyria, while of the far greater and more momentous events which ushered in a new era of the world’s destiny, the records of ‘profane’ history are uniformly silent?

Here, for instance, is the narrative translated from the cuneiform characters on the clay cylinder which records Sennacherib's own account of his expedition to Jerusalem, naturally enough the other side of the story to that given in the book of Kings :—

'Six and forty of the fenced cities, and the fortresses, and the villages round about them, belonging to Hezekiah the Jew, who had not submitted to my rule, I besieged and stormed and captured. I carried away from them two hundred thousand and one hundred and fifty souls, great and small, male and female, and horses, mules, asses, camels, oxen and sheep without number. In his house in Jerusalem I shut up Hezekiah like a bird in a cage. I threw up mounds round about the city from which to attack it, and I blockaded his gates. The cities which I had captured from him I took away from his kingdom and I gave them to Mitinti, king of Ashdod.'

Not only, however, have we confirmation of the invasion of Palestine from Sennacherib's point of view, containing the implied admission that the Assyrian failed to capture Jerusalem, but the further Bible statement that this king was slain subsequently by his two sons Adramelech and Sharezer is corroborated, as well as is also the succession to the throne of his son Esarhaddon, who fought and overthrew his patricidal brothers. The cylinder recording these latter incidents

was found under the foundations of the great gate in the north wall of the city of Babylon, and is now safely guarded, with other priceless records, in the British Museum.

I give these facts at considerable length in order to show that other incidents in the Bible, in far darker ages of the world's history, have been fully substantiated by outside evidence. There is, therefore, no gainsaying the fact that it is a matter for extreme surprise that the facts, if facts they are, of which I am now writing, have not been also so corroborated. It is indeed, one of the possibilities of the future that excavations in Egypt or elsewhere may throw light on this most perplexing problem, but so far they have failed to do so.

There are, however, certain definite, specific pieces of historical evidence bearing on the history of this period, and touching nearly the question of the main truth or falsity of the Bible records ; and though a consideration of these may not lead us to form any absolute or definite conclusion, it is certainly important that they should be considered and carefully weighed by those who are interested in probing this most difficult question.

With regard to these evidences, the first

point that strikes us is that for the whole of the first century of the Christian era, there is nothing to be found among the writings of any of the pagan authors which has any reference whatever to the Gospel story. Of the existence of Jesus, to all appearance, they know nothing. We have, then, to pass on to the second century for whatever indications we can obtain which may throw light on the problem before us. The first reference we can trace which recognises the existence of the Christians occurs in a letter written by Pliny the Younger presumably about A.D. 112. Pliny was pro-Praetor of Pontus and Bithynia, and inquired of the Emperor Trajan in what manner he was to treat the cases of Christians who were arraigned under his jurisdiction. Where anonymous charges were preferred, was he to take notice of, or to ignore them? Were those who refused to sacrifice to the Emperor and to abjure their religious faith to be condemned, apart from any charge beyond that of being Christians? It is clear, from the inquiries made in this letter, that Christianity in these regions had by this time acquired a very considerable hold over a by no means insignificant section

of the population, and that it was the then policy of the Roman Empire to suppress it wherever possible. Trajan's reply to Pliny, however, indicates that the Imperial wish was to do nothing which would lead to the encouragement of professional informers. It has been argued that this letter of Pliny is a forgery, but I do not think there is any adequate justification for the view.

Then, again, we have two or three sentences in Suetonius' life of the Emperor Claudius, which have given rise to controversy and discussion far, as it appears to me, in excess of their intrinsic importance. Suetonius who, by the way, was born about A.D. 70, and was private secretary to Hadrian (Emperor A.D. 117-138), is referring to a Jewish outbreak which occurred during the reign of Claudius—*i.e.* sometime between the years A.D. 41 and 54—and in alluding to it he uses the words '*impulsore Chresto*,' the meaning of the expression undoubtedly being that the disturbance in question took place 'at the instigation of one Chrestus.' Ingenious people have attempted to identify this Chrestus with the Jesus Christ of the Gospels, and in order to do so have done violence to the obvious meaning of the Latin phrase.

The words can only imply that Chrestus was the Jack Cade of the insurrection. They can by no possibility be referred to one who, according to the Gospel history, never went to Rome, and was already dead at the date of the incident. It is, however quite open to argument that the rising was of a Messianic character, and that the Chrestus so called was one of the Mahdis of the time who enjoyed a brief vogue as the accredited prophet of Jehovah. Chrestus at least is found as a variant of Christos, and is, in fact, the word in the form in which it is met with in the most ancient Christian inscription of which we have any knowledge, the legend over the door of a Marcionite church.\* Although, however, there is no doubt that the words were in early Christian times used interchangeably, the Greek meaning is quite different, Chrestos (χρήστος) signifying 'good' while Christos (χρίστος) is simply 'the anointed'—*i.e.* the Messiah.

There is nothing to show the origin of this disturbance, and whether or not it had any connection with any religious movement. In another sentence in his life of Nero, while referring to an episode of far more import-

\* 318 A.D.

ance from the point of view of our present inquiry, Suetonius speaks of 'certain Christiani' who were severely punished and tortured under this Emperor, describing them as a sect who believed in a new and noxious superstition. This passage may be assumed to refer to the same occurrence as is alluded to in a much disputed passage of the *Annals* of Tacitus (xv. 44). In the record of Tacitus we have a graphic account of the persecution of these 'Christiani' as a sequel to the great fire of Rome which occurred in the year A.D. 64. Popular rumour had it that the Emperor, against whom any criminal charge was freely believed, had himself been the author of this destructive conflagration. There was probably no foundation for the accusation, even if it were true, as legend averred, that Nero had recourse to his fiddle to distract his attention from the disaster to his capital. In any case he found it politic to search for a scapegoat, and the Jewish community, always unpopular, seemed to him to offer a ready outlet whereby the people's indignation could be diverted from himself. Thus occurred what is generally termed the first Christian persecution.

Two points arise with regard to these two



parallel passages. Firstly, are they genuine or forgeries? Secondly, were these 'Christiani' followers of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, or were they merely Messianists?

Now with regard to the first question, I think a pretty decisive answer can be given in each case. There is absolutely no reason whatever to suspect forgery in the case of Suetonius. His allusion to these Christians as believers in a noxious superstition precludes the supposition that it was a later Christian interpolation. There is nothing in the sentence itself or in its context to lend colour to such an hypothesis. The passage in Tacitus stands on a very different footing, containing, as it does, a definite statement that the *Christiani* in question were followers of that Christ who suffered the death penalty under the procuratorship of Pontius Pilate. No statement could be more precise or more important from the point of view of Christian evidence. Unfortunately, however, there is practically no doubt that the words are a later interpolation. The expression with regard to Pontius Pilate is not one which would have been used by the Roman historian, and it has the ring of a regular Christian formula. Had Tacitus alluded to

Pontius Pilate he would not have spoken of him simply as 'Procurator,' which to Roman ears would have had no meaning, but as Procurator of Judæa. This, however, is not all. The expression used in the sentence '*Tiberio imperitante*,' 'when Tiberius was Emperor,' is not an expression that any Roman of that date could possibly have employed. Though we are in the habit of speaking for convenience' sake of the 'Roman Emperors' of those days, they were not so described by their contemporaries. Although endowed with as great powers as have been wielded by many a dictator, they continued to exercise them under the guise of old republican forms. There is no parallel to the expression elsewhere in any Roman author of the date. The Roman emperor in those days was 'Princeps Senatus,' and the expression would have been 'Principe Tiberio,' or some similar phrase. The forger, whoever he was, has given his case away owing to his lack of knowledge of Roman history and classical Latin. With regard to the remainder of the passage in question opinions are divided as to whether it ever emanated from Tacitus; but the fact of the historical character of

the incident itself is borne out by Suetonius' brief remarks.

The forged sentence in Tacitus identifies the Christians who suffered by this outbreak with the followers of Jesus, and confirms the Gospel statement that Jesus suffered death under the procuratorship of Pontius Pilate. Where, it may be asked, if these facts were universally known and recognized, was the necessity for inserting the passage? It will, I think, be clear from my earlier observations that the Christian movement, emanating from Judæa, ended by absorbing many other kindred Gnostic sects, whose beliefs had doubtless considerably more in common with the mysticism of Paul than with the teaching of Jesus and his other apostles. The two streams of thought represented severally by Jesus the Nazarene and by Paul of Tarsus united to form one religion, and it was probably the great accession of strength and above all things the popular element thus added to the Gnostic tradition, which led to the subsequent absorption of all Gnostic Christian sects by Christianity proper. The point before us raises the question as to how far, at the date of the Neronian persecution, the two streams had

coalesced. There was clearly a determined effort being made, of which Paul was the protagonist, to absorb one in the other. Of this absorption Peter, we may assume, from such evidence as is before us, was an uncompromising opponent. Presumably the forgery of Tacitus was one of numerous similar attempts to cover all gaps and make the origins of Christianity appear as one single movement, whose fountain and source was Jesus of Nazareth. It is, however, obvious that such interpolations can be used as arguments to discredit the whole Gospel narrative.

So much, then, for the evidence from the point of view of official Rome. We next come to a very important authority for the Jewish history of those times—one who has been already alluded to by me in this paper—Joseph ben Mattatiah, better known to posterity under the name he subsequently assumed of Flavius Josephus.

Josephus's father was a member of one of the High-priestly families, a contemporary of Pontius Pilate, and presumably, therefore, might have been expected to have had full knowledge of the incidents that took place in connection with the arrest and trial of Jesus Christ, even if he had not actually taken part

in them himself. Who, therefore, one would have thought, more likely than his son, to throw light on the occurrences? So obvious did this argument appear to the early Christians that one of the more daring took steps to remedy the very obvious omission. The result is the passage in Josephus's *Jewish Antiquities* (xviii. 3, 3), which, like the passage in Tacitus above referred to, is a flagrant and certain forgery, and is generally enclosed in brackets in editions of this author. The passage in question runs as follows :—

At this time appeared Jesus, a wise man, if indeed he is to be called a man. For he accomplished marvellous things, was the master of men who accept truth gladly, and drew many Jews and also many Greeks after him. This man was the Christ. He was denounced by the elders of our nation to Pilate, who condemned him to be crucified; but those who loved him from the beginning did not cease to revere him; for he appeared on the third day, risen from the dead, as the holy prophets and as a thousand other marvels connected with him had foretold. And the sect which received the name of Christians from him still exists.

Josephus was a Jew and not a Christian, and it was, of course, totally impossible for him to have written in this style. The point, however, arises : Did he know anything of Jesus?

Had he never even heard of him? Or alternatively did he write of him in such hostile terms that early Christian copyists took the trouble to have the passage or passages suppressed? If they did the latter, they have rendered a bad service to Christianity by obliterating a valuable piece of historical evidence as to the very existence of the founder of their religion. If, on the other hand, we assume the former alternative, nothing could be so calculated to cast discredit upon the whole Gospel narrative.\* There is indeed one casual allusion in Josephus's voluminous writings to a certain Jacobus, 'the brother of Jesus called Christ.' This has been regarded as an interpolation, but we cannot say that it is so with any certainty; however, if it is to be really attributed to Josephus, we may conclude that he merely regarded Jesus as one of the numerous Messiahs that appeared from time to time and claimed no special notice from his pen.

I have already alluded to Philo, the Jewish

\* The latter of these alternatives appears extremely probable, and the apparent abbreviation of the narrative at this point gives it colour.

philosopher of Alexandria, and his significant silence on the subject. Another historian of the same date, Justus of Tiberias, who was presumably in Judæa if not in Jerusalem at the time of the crucifixion but whose works are now lost, was equally silent. Photius read his history as late as the ninth century and amusingly attributes his silence on the subject to malevolence. It will be seen from the above records that the real historical evidence we have on the subject of the life of Jesus, outside the Gospel narrative, is mainly, if not entirely, of a negative character. So far from confirming the Gospel story, it even fails to substantiate the fact that Jesus Christ ever existed. If he did, one thing appears to be clear: his life, his mission, his death—in short, all the incidents of his career—produced so little effect upon his contemporaries that historical allusion to him and his followers was deemed unnecessary. In the face of this it is plain that the more sensational portion of the record of the evangelists must be definitively abandoned as historical fact. It does not, however, follow that an itinerant preacher of the name of Jesus did not exist at this date, whose teaching generations later had results of the importance of which none

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of his contemporaries or immediate successors ever dreamed. The problem is indeed a thorny one, and it is difficult to evolve any coherent theory which will account for all the facts. It seems probable from what historical evidence we possess that even during Josephus's own lifetime Christianity (not, however, by any means always under that name) assumed the proportions of a world-wide religion. If this was so, and its founder was one of whose doings, life and death Josephus's father had full knowledge, we can only draw one conclusion from the historian's silence. Knowing as he must have done of the rapid growth and widespread ramifications of the Christian community, it never occurred to him to associate its origin with the personality of the itinerant Jewish preacher who, some half a dozen years before his birth, had met with such a tragic fate.

This brings us back to the theory outlined above, that Christianity and Gnosticism were, in great part at least, one in their origin ; that the Gnostic faith was similar to that of Paul of Tarsus ; that its rapid development dates from the first century of our era ; but that its adherents must have numbered



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tens of thousands at a date long anterior to the birth of Jesus Christ, the bulk of whose teaching and whose ideal morality were incorporated in the new faith.

I have suggested more than once in the above observations that there is no proof positive that Jesus of Nazareth—or shall we say Jesus the Nazarene?—ever really existed at all. I think that the summary which I have given makes the position in this matter fairly clear, and indeed there have been not a few writers who have adopted this standpoint definitely in the past, and supported their contention with very strong arguments. It has been contended by such writers that the Jesus Christ of the Gospels was an amalgamation of several different historical characters, three of whom have been suggested to have been Jesus ben Pandera, Apollonius of Tyana, and the Indian Buddha.

With regard to the first of these, the existence of a Rabbi of the name of Jesus or Jeschu, who was born some 100 years before the alleged birth of Jesus Christ, is fully established. He is the only Jesus of whom the Jewish Talmud records have any knowledge. He appears to have been a Rabbi noted for his independence of mind

and unorthodox views. At the time of the persecution of the Pharisees by Jannai or Jannæus, the son of John Hyrcanus the First (king of Judæa, 104-78 B.C.), this Jesus appears to have fled to Egypt, and to have returned again to Palestine after the tyrant's death. Stories with regard to his mother Miriam recall similar ones related of the Virgin Mary, and the recorded disputes of Jesus with the Pharisees might well be a reminiscence of the verbal polemics and controversies said to have been engaged in between Jeschu and his more orthodox brother Rabbis. I confess, however, it appears to me that those who have attempted to dispute the very existence of Jesus of Nazareth as a distinct personality have sought to prove too much. It is giving the romancer too much credit to suggest that he was able to portray so marked and so individual a character as that of the Gospel Jesus. Moreover, if we dismiss Jesus as fiction we shall have still to account for the story of St Paul, a character which stands out in scarcely less bold outline than that of Jesus, but which is of a totally alien type. We must accept his epistles as forgeries. We must explain away the dispute

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between Peter and Paul which played such a marked part in the history of the early Jewish Christian Church and we must evolve some theory which will account for the widespread recognition of Jesus and the acceptance of the main outlines of his story, apart from its more improbable embellishments, as early as the first years of the second century.

It can hardly be doubted, I think, after a judicial survey of the whole field, that a denial of the existence of the founder of Christianity will involve us in far greater difficulties than the alternative assumption that the Gospel narrative as we have it represents a very much over-coloured and embellished account, but that, in spite of this, it contains within itself the nucleus of a true story of a great preacher, teacher, and mystic who was believed in and accepted, it is true, by a small and uneducated following, but for the most part was unnoticed and ignored alike by the learned and the political world, even his ignominious death seeming to contemporaries no more than a common incident of the criminal history of the time.

With regard to such stories as the Resurrection and Ascension, there is not, it appears to me, any necessity to regard these

as otherwise than subsequent accretions to the original story. The allusion to the Resurrection in St Mark is of the briefest possible character, and almost apologetic. The records in the other Gospels are hopelessly contradictory, as is also the further record which appears in the New Testament under the name of St Paul. The Bible evidence, thus taken as a whole, can only be characterised by the critic as absolutely worthless. Jesus, like Julius Cæsar, may have appeared in his astral form to his disciples after death. Some may have seen it and been impressed; others may have regarded the matter scornfully as an ordinary ghost story of the day and no better than an old wives' tale. It is obvious from St Paul's own arguments in his Epistles, that among the Christian community itself in the early days there were many who were totally sceptical, and the great Apostle felt compelled to set himself to argue that apart from the resurrection of its founder, the faith of the Church was without justification, a position which from the Christian standpoint of the present day it would seem not a little curious that he should have laboured so painfully to make good.

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A NEW edition of an extremely interesting book by Mr F. C. Conybeare, entitled *Myth, Magic and Morals*, has recently appeared from the publishing house of Watts & Co., dealing with the entire question of Christian origins. It is I think, unfortunate that the author has chosen the title in question, some defence of which appears in the preface to the second edition. The drawback of the title is not, however—as seems to have been suggested—that it contains an implication that much of the gospel-narrative is myth, but rather that it fails to convey the subject-matter of the book, which therefore, is liable to pass unnoticed by many of those who would be most interested to read it. The title, in fact, rather suggests a study by Mr Andrew Lang than a contribution to the evidences of early Christianity. It seems to

me that the book in question is one of the most lucid, and at the same time most comprehensive that has yet been written on the subject. The author has taken full advantage of the researches of German critics, and his book covers a very wide range. I should have been glad, however, to have seen a fuller consideration given to the question of the dates of the books of the New Testament, a matter which is passed over in a very superficial way, and I cannot but think that the dates assigned to the gospels are, for reasons I state subsequently, too early.\*

In my last paper I discussed the question of the historical evidences, outside the Bible record, bearing on the

\* I am glad here to acknowledge my indebtedness for some important points in the following brief summary to Mr Conybeare's book, in which some of my readers may care to follow up the subject, in spite of a singularly ill-placed reference to Sir William Crookes and *Psychical Research*, which should certainly have been omitted in the new edition, striking, as it does, a curiously early Victorian note in a book published in 1910. Is—one wonders—all the literature of *Psychical Research* for the last dozen years a dead letter to Mr Conybeare? He would at least get his true facts about the number of scientists of European fame who have investigated Eusapia Palladino from Mr Hereward Carrington's book, *Eusapia Palladino and Her Phenomena*. (London : Werner Laurie.)

authenticity of the story of Jesus of Nazareth and his apostles, and pointed out how singularly meagre they are, and how the sum total of them, so far from confirming the gospel story, does not even actually amount to proof presumptive of the existence of the founder of Christianity. I suggested, however, how exceedingly difficult it would be to accept the alternative supposition that Jesus never existed, and how impossible it would be to explain the rise of the Christian religion, the founding of the Churches by St Paul and St Peter and their rapid growth within the following century without accepting the main outlines of the narrative as authentic.

I referred also in this connection to the Pauline Epistles, the acceptance of the genuineness of which must carry with it the admission of the life and death of Jesus at approximately the date indicated. On these the evidence clearly hinges, for if we can establish their *bona fides* we have that proof positive which we have sought in vain in historical records. The importance of the point, therefore, cannot be exaggerated.

Modern criticism, outside the inevitably prejudiced ecclesiastical ring, tends to accept

as genuine these Pauline Epistles, excepting those to Timothy and Titus and possibly the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians. The Epistle to the Hebrews has, of course, long been known to be by another hand, so early a Christian authority as Tertullian attributing it to Barnabas. The standpoint of the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews is indeed nearly akin to that of the Apostle to the Gentiles, but the style and manner are the poles asunder. Paul's is, in fact, none too easy a style to imitate, and it would be hard to forge such epistles as those to the Corinthians and Galatians. The very outspoken references in the latter to the quarrel between Paul and Peter bear indeed independent evidence to its genuineness, all the tendency of later generations having been to minimize and make these dissensions as insignificant as possible, a tendency strongly evidenced by the writer of the Acts, whose attempts to approximate the opinions of the two apostles to each other show little regard for the historical conscience, but who doubtless considered that the laudable end in view justified the means employed. The whole standpoint of Paul was such a remarkable one that had it not been adopted by the



great apostle it is safe to say that it could never have been invented and foisted upon him from without.

Although, however, I think we may safely accept the principal epistles attributed to Paul as his own genuine writing, there has evidently been considerable confusion and mixing-up of manuscripts in the case of some of them. It will, for instance, be noticed that in the Epistle to the Romans the last chapter is in reality Chapter Fifteen, which ends with the word 'Amen'. There is, however, appended to this epistle a further chapter (chap. xvi.), in which the apostle commends Phœbe, a servant of the Church at Cenchreæ, to the care of his correspondents, Cenchreæ being the port of Corinth, and Phœbe being obviously a person to whom his Roman readers could have been of no sort of use. Paul then sends greeting to a large number of friends mentioned by name, beginning with Aquila and Priscilla, who, curiously enough, were residing at Ephesus. Another of these followers to whom he sends greetings is Epænetus. 'my beloved and the first fruits of Achaia unto Christ'; evidently, therefore, another resident of the coast-line of Greece or Asia Minor.

To these he adds a list of other people, such as Urbanus, 'his fellow-worker,' Stachys, his 'beloved,' and Rufus, 'the chosen in the Lord.' These people are all evidently well known to Paul, in spite of the curious fact that the apostle had himself, at that time, never been to Rome.

It is obvious that this chapter, if genuine at all, has nothing whatever to do with the Epistle to the Romans; probably it is a piece off some Epistle to the Ephesians, which has got tacked on to the Roman epistle by inadvertence.

We meet with a similar trouble in the matter of the Second Epistle to Timothy written from Rome. When this Epistle was written Mark had not yet gone to Rome, as is evidenced by the request, 'Take Mark and bring him with thee,' but when Paul sent his Epistle to the Colossians Mark was certainly with him, as he says, 'Aristarchus saluteth you and Mark the cousin of Barnabus' (Colossians iv., verse 10). We should conclude from this that the Second Epistle to Timothy was written before that to the Colossians. Other evidence, however, points in a diametrically opposite direction. Demas is stated by Paul to have been with him in

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the Epistle to the Colossians, whereas in the Second Epistle to Timothy he has already deserted him. This throws suspicion either on the Epistle to the Colossians or on the Epistle to Timothy. There are, however, other suspicious circumstances with regard to the latter, and it is difficult to believe that this can be the genuine writing of the apostle. Probably Colossians is authentic.\*

We are accustomed to whittle down the teachings contained in the New Testament to a sort of quasi-homogenous hotch-potch of dogma and belief, attempting in a rough-and-ready sort of way to harmonize Jesus and Paul, Peter and James, the author of the Fourth Gospel and the writer of Revelations. One might almost as well attempt to harmonize the opinions of the different Greek philosophers and present them as a concrete whole. It is safe to say that Jesus would not have recognised his gospel as taught by Paul, and to Peter Paul was little better than a wolf in sheep's clothing.

\* Those of my readers who wish to go more into detail in this matter should obtain a copy of *The First Christian Generation*, by James Thomas. The matter in question is dealt with in pages 257-261.

But if the Epistles of Paul serve to confirm the truth in outline of the Gospel story, it is in outline only that they establish it. What more natural one would suppose than to find in these epistles confirmatory details of Jesus' life and teaching, details which, given by a contemporary, would be of such priceless value? We meet, however, with nothing of the kind. Extraordinary as it must appear, Jesus the man was nothing to his greatest follower. Paul, the person who in reality founded Christianity as a world-religion, deliberately shut his eyes to the entire life-story of the man whom he preached.\* It was Christ crucified, and Christ risen again that Paul proclaimed, not Jesus at all. He did not learn of Jesus from the other apostles, who knew him in the flesh. As he states himself, 'I make known unto you, brethren, as touching the gospel which has been preached by me, that it is not after man. For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, except by way of revelation on the part of Jesus Christ.' So after his miraculous conversion he says of

\* A long discussion has recently appeared on this subject in the pages of the *Hibbert Journal* under the heading 'Jesus or Christ?'

himself, 'Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood; neither went I up to Jerusalem to them that were apostles before me; but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned unto Damascus.' The writer of the Acts tells a different story, with the obvious purpose of reconciling the teaching of the two great apostles, but the story written by Paul contradicts the story written by the author of the Acts, and we need not hesitate which to adopt. Paul was indeed a visionary who had been caught up to the third heaven, and heard things unspeakable, but the Author of the Sermon on the Mount remained a stranger to him until the end. Perhaps it was well that it was so, for the Gospel that Paul preached dealt in eternal verities in which time and the circumstances of history could find no place. With Paul we are in a similar, if not in the same, atmosphere as we are with the author of John's Gospel—perhaps John the Elder, known to Papias—when he tells us that the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. But for the Christianity of Paul, Paul alone has responsibility, though the writer of Hebrews had imbibed the same ideas, probably from the apostle himself. The great sacrifice upon

the cross which consummated once for all the vicarious sacrifices of the past, the death for our sins and the rising again for our justification, the New Adam, who was to be no mere Jewish Messiah, but the Saviour from perdition of the whole human race—in short, the Cosmic Christ—all these were Paul's conceptions and Paul's only. The fact that they were looked at askance by the other apostles mattered nothing. It is true 'those who were reputed to be pillars of the Church' received him coldly and were openly sceptical of his doctrine, but as he observes scornfully, 'Whatsoever they were matters not to me ; God accepteth no man's person.' This of Peter, John, James, 'the Lord's brother,' and the rest !

If we have in the majority of the epistles attributed to Paul genuine documents written within a generation of the death of Jesus, but which only occasionally and incidentally throw any light on his life-history, what is to be said with regard to the gospels whose purport is to give us this record ? Of these we know there are four, but of the four three only, viz., those of Matthew, Mark and Luke, are of any real historical value. The fourth, that attributed to John the Evangelist,

bears on the face of it its late origin, and is rather a religious romance than a *bona fide* narrative of events. The object of the writer is to identify Jesus Christ with the divine Logos and to transmogrify his teaching with that end in view. The critic in search of facts is left therefore with the other three so-called synoptic gospels from which to obtain what reliable evidence he can.

Now the first impression naturally will be that here we have three independent records of the circumstances in question, which will either serve to corroborate or to modify each other. This, however, on further investigation we find not to be the case. The position is briefly as follows :

In Mark's gospel we have a record, claiming to be historical, of the ministry of Jesus Christ, commencing with an account of the preaching of John the Baptist and the baptism of Jesus by John, and continuing immediately afterwards with a narrative of the temptation of Jesus by the Devil in the Wilderness, and the calling of Simon Peter, Andrew, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, to be his disciples. We are at once plunged after this into his ministry in

Galilee. Of Jesus' early life-history, appearance, age, etc., we learn nothing. The object of the writer of the gospel is obviously to identify Jesus with the expected Messiah of the Jews, and his record appears to be subservient to this purpose. It is noteworthy that the last six chapters of Mark (chaps. xi.-xvi.) are devoted entirely to an account of the trial and crucifixion, and occupy as much space as the whole account of the Galilean ministry.

The record is a narrative of events, including numerous miracles, and the teaching of Jesus does not occupy so prominent a position as in either the gospels of Matthew or Luke. Dates are conspicuous by their absence, and no consecutive narrative of the life of Jesus, even during the short period of his ministry, is to be met with. Incidents follow one another without apparent explanation of their sequence or why one led to another, or what occurred in the interval between them. The narrative gives the impression of putting incidents together without regard to the occasions on which they took place, but rather from the point of view of the narrator's convenience. Thus, the first day of Jesus' sojourn in Capernaum



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is crowded with memorable occurrences, while what happened in the year following is left to the reader's imagination. There is no definite record of any itinerary, and the scene shifts from place to place without explanation. While the portrait of Jesus dominates the whole narrative, practically all the remaining characters that appear in the gospel pages are shadowy and lifeless, the apostles occupying a position in relation to their Master very similar to that of Watson to Sherlock Holmes in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's celebrated romances.

It seems fairly clear that the writer of this gospel, whoever he was, played merely the part of editor and arranger of earlier records, and in several instances he has obviously duplicated the same story, having received it from different sources and assuming that the two varying records were stories of different incidents, instead of being merely narratives from different sources, and with the amount of variation that handing on from mouth to mouth naturally involves of a single occurrence. Thus we have two records of what is beyond question the same incident in Mark vi., verses 30-35 and

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Mark viii., verses 1-13. A careful reading of these two stories will leave no doubt in the mind of the unprejudiced critic that they refer to one occasion, the wording of a number of the phrases being indeed practically identical. These are respectively, the feeding of the five thousand from five loaves and two fishes, and the feeding of the four thousand from seven loaves and a few small fishes. It is true that the two incidents are summed up in words attributed to Jesus (Mark viii., vers. 19-20), who citing first one and then the other asks of his disciples, 'Do ye not now believe?' but if this suggests anything, it rather indicates that the narrative already appeared duplicated in the source from which the author of the gospel received it, and this would carry us back to a still earlier date for the original record. That speeches of this kind were put into the mouths of the principal actors in the New Testament narrative with a very free hand is evidenced by such an instance as that recorded in Luke's\* gospel (chap. xi. vers.

\* 'Luke' is the greatest sinner in this respect, and most of the speeches of Paul in the Acts bear evidence of the writer's imaginative powers.

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49-51), where Jesus is represented as saying:—

I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute: That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, who perished between the altar and the temple.

In the parallel passage in Matthew (chap. xxiii., vers., 34-36) Zacharias is identified as 'Zacharias son of Barachias.' Now this is obviously a way of saying that the Jews have killed and persecuted the prophets from the earliest times of history up to the date when the speaker is addressing them. It so happens, however, that we know exactly who this Zacharias was, and we are also acquainted—thanks to Josephus—with the date and circumstances of his death.

At the time when the rebellion of the Jews against Roman authority (which culminated in the destruction of Jerusalem) was working up to a climax, *i.e.*, about A.D. 68, the leaders of the popular movement found an obstacle to their plans in the person of one Zacharias, the son of Baruch (alias Barachias), whose hatred of wickedness, as Josephus observes, had incurred their

hostility. Failing to obtain his condemnation by process of law, they had recourse to assassination, and—to quote Josephus's own words—‘Two of the boldest of them fell upon Zacharias in the middle of the temple and slew him.’ Jesus at this date had been dead, if we accept the ordinary chronology, between thirty and forty years, and it is quite obvious that the speech was invented for his benefit by a late compiler of records, probably about the middle of the second century. Josephus's *Antiquities of the Jews* was utilised in this way on other occasions by the author, or rather compiler, of the Gospel of St Luke and the Acts—apparently the same person—and it is probably due to the fact that we owe our possession of this valuable work to the importance attached to it by the early Christian Church, that in the copies we possess we have no record of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, but instead a few lines only of obvious and palpable forgery.

This matter has been alluded to in a previous paper, but it is difficult to believe that in this book as it originally stood, all reference to the life and ministry of Jesus can have been omitted, unless Jesus himself was a mythical character.

For reasons I have already indicated, I regard it as impossible to accept this alternative, and it remains for us to suppose that the portion of Josephus's history dealing with this subject was too truthful to be to the taste of the Fathers of the Early Church.

Another instance of a similar duplication of narratives to that above referred to will be found by comparing Mark xii., verses 38-40, with Matthew xxiii. 1 and following verses, Luke xi. 37 and following verses, and again Luke xx., verses 45-47. Obviously all these records refer to the same incident. It is not improbable, again, that the miracles recorded in Mark vii., verses 31-36, and Mark viii., verses 22-26, are one and the same, though in one case the subject of the miracle is a blind man, and in the other, one that is deaf and has an impediment in his speech. The other details are, however, so extraordinarily alike that it is hard to believe they would have been repeated ; and in stories depending upon oral tradition—which these records undoubtedly did for many years before they were written down—a confusion about the nature of the malady of which the sufferer was healed is exceedingly probable. It is noteworthy in this latter case that the main

point which would lead us to suppose that the incidents were two and not one is that one (the first) is recorded as following the arrival of Jesus at Bethsaida, and the other as occurring after he came through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee. An eminent critic (Wellhausen) has, however, pointed out that Sidon in the first passage is an error for Saidan—that is, Bethsaida. In both these instances of miraculous healing, the patient is brought to Jesus, who is begged to cure him. In each case Jesus takes him apart from the multitude and uses his own spittle as a remedy, in one case putting his fingers into the man's ears, and in the other laying them on his eyes. Both stories end with the injunction of secrecy.

The moral, then, of these duplications of narratives is that 'Mark' was a compiler and putter-together of the older narratives, which he received—apparently most of them—in a written form, others possibly from oral tradition. We may, however, perhaps trace the hand of the original Mark, in the record of the going up to Jerusalem, and the story of the crucifixion. This portion of the narrative was quite possibly adopted by the compiler with little modification.

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If this was the case with Mark's gospel, how about the other two, those, namely of Matthew and Luke? It is a remarkable thing, if we look carefully into the narratives of these two other evangelists, that we shall find on examination that they do not consist of records independent of the second evangelist Mark, but that Mark's gospel can be discovered embedded in the gospels of both, and in many instances not only is this the case, but the quotations from Mark are absolutely word for word. It is impossible, in the narrow limits of this essay, to quote extensive passages in support of this statement, but any reader who wishes to verify it can do so with ease by taking down his family Bible from the shelf. I would ask those who are sufficiently interested to compare such passages as Luke (chap. v., vers. 27-32) with Mark (chap. i., vers. 13-17), and Matthew (chap. ix., vers. 9-13), and if they have a Greek Testament and can read Greek, they will find the resemblances closer still.

It is quite clear in a case like this that Matthew and Luke have deliberately appropriated the text of Mark and re-touched it to suit their convenience, and to justify their

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own particular standpoint.\* This obviously does not explain more than a portion of these two gospels. Further investigation will, however, reveal to us the fact that there is another source which Matthew and Luke have in common, but which was apparently unknown to Mark, and that from this source (an original now lost to us) they have copied also practically verbatim. The evidence of this will be found by comparing the following passages dealing with the temptation of Jesus by the Devil in the wilderness: Matthew iv., verses 1-11, Mark i., verses 12-13, Luke iv., verses 1-13. Here it will be seen that Matthew iv., verse 1, corresponds to Mark i., verses 12-13, and to Luke iv., verses 1-2. Mark gives us no further record than these two verses, but Matthew and Luke have obviously taken from the other source above referred to, which critics have decided to name 'Q' (or the non-Marcian document), and added to the brief record of Mark a much more detailed and, I may add, a more incredible narrative, in which the Devil is made to subject Jesus to a variety of tempta-

\* The object of a number of these modifications is obviously to obliterate what the other evangelists deemed the too human aspect of Jesus as portrayed by Mark.



tions, such as taking him up into a high mountain and showing him all the kingdoms of the world, and bidding him worship him ; taking him on to a pinnacle of the temple and daring him to cast himself down from thence, and other similar challenges of a more or less grotesque character.

The bulk of the gospels of \* Matthew and Luke, then, consist in what they have taken from Mark on the one hand and from this non-Markan document on the other. There is considerable probability that both the writers of Matthew's and Luke's gospels picked and chose according to their taste from this source, and it is of course impossible to identify the instances in which one has taken from this source and not the other. It is when we come to the death, resurrection and post-resurrection incidents of the life of Jesus that the greatest discrepancies appear between the different gospels, and so far as we can judge there was no record of these in the document in question.

\* There are, however, extensive passages in Matthew which are confined to this Gospel, notably discourses of Jesus which may or may not have been part of the original '*Logia*.' It should also be noted that it is quite an arguable hypothesis that the synonym Q stands for more than one early record.

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This non-Marcan document (or 'Q'), upon which Matthew's and Luke's gospels were partly based, is possibly the same collection of the sayings of Jesus as is referred to by Papias as the Logia of Matthew. If it is not this, it may be a later form of these sayings edited and added to, and made into a more coherent whole. So, also, our Mark is the later and more developed form of the Reminiscences of Mark, which is the only other form of gospel or nucleus of gospel of which Papias had any knowledge. Luke's is clearly a later gospel, and some writers are inclined, apparently without any adequate justification, to identify it with Marcion's\* gospel, which certain Fathers of the Church denounced as heretical. Of Luke's and John's gospels Papias evidently knew nothing, nor did he have any very high opinion of the collection of sayings attributed to Matthew, or the records and reminiscences of Mark. With regard to

\* Marcion was the author of a book entitled *Antitheses*, in which he drew attention to the numerous contradictions between the gospel of Jesus and the attitude of the Hebrew Deity. Jehovah he described as 'The just God, in opposition to the good God who inspired Jesus, and whose attributes were love and mercy.' The book created considerable scandal among the orthodox.

the former collection this early Christian bishop observes: 'Matthew had written down the Lord's speeches in Hebrew, and each one interpreted them as best he could.' For 'Hebrew' we should of course read 'Aramaic,' the old Hebrew having become quite obsolete. Clearly, then, there were various versions of this Aramaic pamphlet translated into Greek. With regard to the reminiscences of Mark, Papias observes: 'Mark, the mouthpiece of Peter, carefully wrote down all he could remember, but he did not write all that Jesus did and said in proper order, for he had not heard or followed the Lord; but at a later period he had followed Peter, who gave instruction as occasion arose but did not set forth the Lord's discourses in due order.' There seems to be no doubt that this collection was the nucleus of our Mark. We do not know the exact date of the statement of Papias, but he is said to have suffered martyrdom for his faith when an old man, about A.D. 160, and we, therefore, should probably not be far wrong in putting it in the second quarter of the second century of our era.

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‘God’s in His heaven, all’s right with the world,’ exclaimed the optimistic poet ; and if you shut your eyes to the seamy side of life, and to the doubts and darkneses that encompass the race of man in its progress to its unknown goal, you will find it easy to repeat Browning’s phrase *ad infinitum* and *ad nauseam*. ‘It is well if it ends well, but we do not know how it ends,’ comments a modern mystic and transcendentalist, who certainly does not err on the side of optimism. We might add to this rather non-committal observation the further qualification that we do not know whether it ends at all. There is something about Browning’s optimism which inevitably suggests that there was a definite connection in his case (however little it might be recognised by himself) between a robust constitution combined with a fortune which rendered him independent of the anxieties and struggles of life, and the God in whom

he placed his faith, and to whom he readily tendered his gratitude for having endowed him with the one and the other.

At the other end of the pole comes the man to whose shattered constitution, we are told, we must not attribute his philosophical attitude and views of life. There is nevertheless too inevitably close a connection between mind and body for the disease of the latter not to react detrimentally on the former ; and while it is impossible to ignore the importance of the attitude that Nietzsche adopted, and his message to this generation, it is, to my mind, mere affectation for us to pretend that the reaction of bodily disease upon the intellectual outlook is not extensively apparent throughout his writings. Had Browning exchanged constitutions with Nietzsche, we should never have had from him that oft-quoted poem of self-satisfied optimism.

And yet Nietzsche was not what would be labelled a pessimist. He had, we might almost say, no truck either with optimism or pessimism. Rather was he the preacher of a new morality, a new standard of ethics, and a new aim for man. But he starts with an equally dogmatic negation of Browning's

most dogmatic assertion. 'Dead,' he cries, 'are all the gods. Now we will that Superman live!' To him the question of a future life, the pivot upon which the reason or unreason of all human activities ultimately depends, is a question either to be answered offhand and without inquiry in the negative, or else, if you like to take him so, a question of no consequence to his philosophy. 'Shut your eyes to this world and fix your attention on the other,' says the devout Christian, in all the folly of his other-worldliness. 'Do precisely the opposite,' says Nietzsche, with a scarcely less obvious lack of wisdom. Nietzsche, it is true, preached what appears in the guise of a positive philosophy of life, but it is not so in reality. Take each of his affirmations in turn, and you will find them all originating in the negation of what the German philosopher conceives to be the Christian standpoint. Go through his works with this key in your hand, and you will be astonished how it will open every door in turn.

'Le clericalisme c'est l'ennemi' exclaimed Gambetta. The dominant idea in Nietzsche's mind was that *Christianity* was the enemy, and that the true attitude was to take the Christian

position and diametrically reverse it. And he proceeded to do this with a very remarkable and systematic thoroughness. No previous writer or thinker had ever gone as far. Others might expose the unscientific character of the Bible stories, the inaccuracies of manuscripts, the non-historical nature of the Biblical legends, the damning evidence of forgery or false allocation of authorship, the medley character of the composition of a supposedly uniform production, the absurdity of the inspirational hypothesis. Nietzsche went beyond all these. He took the principles of the Gospel morality, weighed them in the balance and found them, not merely 'wanting,' but radically and essentially unsound; and he proceeded to preach his own morality in its place, if we may call that his own which was merely Christian morality turned inside out. Many another has been labelled Antichrist. No one ever really deserved that name but Friedrich Nietzsche. On the first page of his philosophy might most appropriately be placed the well-known text from the Sermon on the Mount, inverted for the occasion, 'Cursed are the meek!'

The atmosphere of Christianity positively chokes him. After quoting the passage in

which it is said that God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty, 'Enough! Enough! Bad air!' he exclaims. 'Methinks this workshop of virtue positively reeks.'

Nietzsche has been described as anti-Christian and anti-democratic, and the latter statement is undoubtedly true. But this was only part and parcel of his anti-Christianity. The fact that Christianity has been made to subserve the purposes of tyrants, that it has been denounced by a poet as one of 'the creeds outworn from the tyrant's banner torn,' that the republican, in France, in Spain, in Italy, in Portugal, appears in the guise of the natural enemy of priests and priestcraft, makes us all too ready to lose sight of the fact that in its origin and in its essence Christianity was *par excellence* the religion of democracy. But for this reason it could never have triumphed as it did. We may recall how Robert of Sicily, in Longfellow's famous ballad, inquired the meaning of the words the monks were chanting in the chapel, and how, on being informed that they were to be rendered:



‘He hath put down the mighty from their seat, And hath exalted them of low degree,’ he observed :—

‘ ’Tis well that such seditious words are sung  
Only by priests and in the Latin tongue.  
For unto priests and people be it known,  
There is no power shall push *me* from *my* throne.’

There was doubtless something more than the reason alleged by the priests for the retention of the Latin tongue in the services of the Church, and for a firm hand being kept on the sacred volume. The atmosphere of Christianity is an atmosphere of democracy, and nothing has so tended to popularise the democratic idea in the minds of men as the widespread dissemination of the life of Christ as told in the Gospel-narratives. Democracy has to thank Wycliff and Luther for the greatest impetus which it has ever received. Nietzsche fully recognised this, and in attacking Democracy he attacked it as the child of Christianity, the natural offspring, in the field of politics and sociology, of the parent tree.

No two attacks on Christianity were more unlike than Voltaire’s and Nietzsche’s. Voltaire attacked Christianity because it was false to its own principles and the teachings

of its founder. Nietzsche attacked the essential principles of Christianity itself, the moral standpoint of the Creed, the ideal standard of conduct toward which the Christian aimed. The Christian's morality he dubbed *slave-morality*, a degrading code unworthy of the man that was to be partaker of a higher civilisation—the 'Superman' of his dreams.

Nietzsche typifies a reaction against Christianity, the nature of which is to a certain extent inherent in the reactionary character of Christianity itself. It is the tendency of religions generally (and Christianity is no exception to this rule) to bear the natural traces of their origin in the form of evidences of that revolt against excessive self-gratification and insufficient self-control, from which they originally took their rise. Religions thus arise in reaction. In the first impulse of this reaction the repentant sinner sees a crime in the pleasure he has indulged in to excess; but the crime in reality is not in the pleasure, the crime is in the excess. This morbid mood has been perpetuated by Christianity until the Christian has learned to see evil in the most harmless forms of diversion or amusement. 'The

pastor's iterated sin' has thus produced a counter-reaction against the morbid self-condemnation of the Christian and this has at times resulted in a greater excess of licentious abandonment than the original condition from which Christianity itself reacted.

Nietzsche complained that Christianity was responsible for the evolution and perpetuation of a type of man which represented all the faults and weaknesses inevitably arising through its representatives being the oppressed, the weak, and physically and intellectually the least well-favoured. He complained of hearing on all sides—

The wretched alone are the good, the poor, the impotent, the lowly alone are good; only the sufferers, the needy, the sickly, the ugly, are pious; only they are godly, them alone blessedness awaits—but ye, the proud and potent, ye are aye and evermore the cold, the cruel, the lustful, the insatiable, the godless; ye will also be to all eternity the unblessed, the accursed, the damned.

Nietzsche complains bitterly that the morality of paltry people is the measure of all things. This, he says, is the most repulsive kind of degeneracy that civilisation has ever yet brought into existence. 'Will any one,' he asks, 'look down below a little

into the secret process by which ideals are fabricated on earth?' In the interest of slave-morality he complains that 'weakness is falsified into merit, and the impotence which does not rebel is falsified into goodness, abjectness into humility, subjection to those whom one hates into obedience.' He puts his spade to the root of all current theories of morality, and calls for what he describes as a 'transvaluation of values.'

The danger of basing a system of morality upon some particular religion or creed is specially apparent in periods like the present, which witness a general breakdown of the dogmatic faiths in which earlier generations placed their credence. It is only natural that those who have based their moral principles upon their belief in special dogmas should question the validity of this morality when their faith in the dogmas which they have accepted gives way. It is difficult to see, if such a basis is abandoned, on what other foundation we can rest our system of morals, unless it be upon our duty to mankind in general and to our neighbour in particular. Nietzsche fails to recognise this duty, and it is through this failure on his part that he loses touch with the whole

recognised groundwork of morality. It is possible, however, entirely to accept this position, and yet to take strong exception to such counsels of perfection, if we may so call them, as those preached by Jesus Christ in the Sermon on the Mount, an enunciation of the moral code which Nietzsche from his standpoint was most emphatic in denouncing. The point raised by these moral precepts has been too often slurred over. It seems to me that the injunction to turn the cheek to the smiter, if it is seriously intended, can admit of no sort of moral justification. The words used on this subject by Mr F. C. Conybeare, in his *Myth, Magic, and Morals*, I regard as exceedingly apposite.

No State (he says), ancient or modern, has ever tried to regulate its dealings with other States on the principle of turning the other cheek to the smiter; and it would not be just to others to do so in private or municipal life. The object of law and police, and, in a word, of all government, is so to safeguard the person and liberty of the individual that he may make the best of himself and his faculties. If we allow the bully and the thief to rob us and ours with impunity, we encourage him to do the same to others, and betray a sad want of public spirit, even if we do not, by our cowardice, make ourselves his accomplices in evil-doing.

The question, however, naturally suggests itself: had Jesus Christ any idea that he

would be taken literally? Was he not rather speaking in paradox? Paradoxical exaggeration has become so regular a feature of writing and speaking in the present day that it is almost the exception in the case of many writers for us to take their statements, as the French say, 'at the foot of the letter'; but we are apt to forget that paradox is as old as the spoken word, and I very much question if the audience to whom Jesus addressed his remarks really imagined that he intended his advice on a subject like this to be taken in the baldly literal sense. If we argue that he did so, I think at the same time we are bound to admit the entire justification for Mr Conybeare's criticism. But I would submit that this is at least doubtful and would remind my readers that hyperbole and overstatement are devices peculiarly dear to the Oriental temperament, and that full allowance would be made as a matter of course for such methods of phraseology by any Eastern nation.

But it was not merely against an unpractical Utopian ideal that Nietzsche protested, but rather against that entire philosophy of life which sacrifices the few to the many. The conception of the

Brotherhood of Man was hateful to him. He would have joined with Voltaire in urging his followers 'to work for the little public,' but he had none whatever of Voltaire's ardent practical sympathy for the oppressed. Rather he saw in anticipation all the choicest specimens of mankind submerged in a general democratic deluge, where mere numbers would count as opposed to all natural advantages, physical and intellectual. He saw no hope for the vast majority, nor did he consider them worth helping. A nation, in his view, only came into being with the object of evolving its half-dozen greatest men. Such a gospel implied of necessity the worship of the strong and the crushing of the weak. It was worth it, considered Nietzsche, if thereby might be evolved his pet ideal, the Superman.

'I teach you,' says Zarathustra, the imaginary Persian philosopher, who is made to preach the gospel according to Nietzsche. 'I teach you the Superman. Man is something that is to be surpassed. What have ye done to surpass man?'

'All creators, hitherto, have created something superior to themselves, and ye are going to be the ebb of that great tide, and would rather revert again to the beast than surpass man. What is the ape to man? A ridicule and a grievous shame.

And that is just what man is to the Superman, a ridicule and a grievous shame.'

He continues :

The Superman is the meaning of the earth. I conjure you, my brethren, remain true to the earth, and do not believe those who speak to you of supernatural hopes! . . . They are poisoners whether they know it or not. They are despisers of life, decaying curs and poisoned ones of whom the earth is weary. Let them begone!

Elsewhere Nietzsche defines his Superman still further :

Man (he says) is a connecting rope between the animal and the Superman, a rope over an abyss. What is great in man is that he is a bridge, and not a goal.

The conception of evolving a higher type of the human race is one which is very familiar to the Occultist, but the methods by which he would attain his end are far indeed removed from those of Nietzsche. What we feel about the Superman is that, even supposing he had been successfully evolved, he would not be the sort of person one would care to encounter alone on a dark night. As a matter of fact, I think we should be justified in assuming that he would be one of those human pests which it would be to the general interest of mankind



to exterminate at the earliest possible moment. Nietzsche, in fact, has failed to realise the necessity of evolving the higher principles of man, at the same time as the lower. He would evolve the physical and mental, whilst ignoring the spiritual and the emotional. The ideal of Nietzsche is as antagonistic to Occultism as it is to Christianity. Alike for the Occultist and the Christian the ideal man can only be evolved through suffering and self-sacrifice. The difference between their two standpoints is rather that this process in the eyes of the orthodox Christian is consummated by a sort of miracle at the end of one terrestrial existence, while the Occultist more logically carries the evolutionary process onward through innumerable existences on various planes of being. Both would admit that the familiar old French saw, 'Il faut souffrir pour être belle,' is as true of the soul as it is of the body. It is the struggle with adverse circumstances that evolves the higher man, the surmounting of difficulties, the fighting against odds—in short, all those experiences in life's handicap that tend to build up character; and may not character be fitly described as the only real and essential part

of man? The less unselfish the struggle, the higher and the more spiritual will be the type of character. 'The Kingdom of Heaven cometh not by observation,' and those who would become its heirs and inheritors must work out their own salvation and win their way through effort and struggle, not through the substitution of any vicarious victim or divine 'whipping boy.'

He who faints not in the earthly strife,  
From strength to strength advancing; only he,  
His soul well knit and all his battles won,  
Mounts—and *that hardly*—to eternal life.\*

Those who maintain that a perfect God could never have allowed the existence of evil, have missed the whole point of life's struggle, and in doing so have failed to realise that apart from evil, goodness would be without a meaning. The Divine Ideal is a man and not a mollusc. In the fancied existence of some people's dreams, life would never have attained even the vegetable stage. To talk of goodness, or indeed of any form of excellence, apart from the struggle with adverse conditions is simply a contradiction in terms. Nietzsche's Superman so far from evolving a higher type

\* Matthew Arnold.

would be degenerating into a lower. He would not even have evolved the one virtue without which all the others become worthless—namely, self-mastery. If a man attains this in the progress of his upward struggle through many bodies on many planes, whatever price he may have paid, he will in the vulgar phrase have obtained ‘full value for his money.’ For, in the words of the author of *The Altar in the Wilderness* :—

‡ The body is the Hall of Initiation wherein a man’s soul is tried and strengthened. Within it the master, the mystic alchemist, takes all the baser elements and transmutes them into pure gold. Here experience is built into strength and strength uplifted to virtue, and it is by means of these virtues which are often sublimated from the basest experiences that the soul of man evolves to the highest. . . . The opposite pole of every vice is a virtue into which this vice may be transmuted.\*

It is in the symbol of the cross and in all that this symbol connotes that the attractive power of the Christian Faith inheres. The ideal of self-sacrifice is there, the ideal of the Brotherhood of the human race, of one working for another and helping another, even if it be to his own disadvantage. The whole conception of the upward struggle of

\* *The Altar in the Wilderness*. By Ethelbert Johnson. W. Rider & Son, Ltd. 1s. 6d. net.

the human race lies indeed in the one motto,  
*In hoc signo vinces.*

The Low Church Bishop who stipulated in attending the confirmation service of his ecclesiastical subordinate of High Church proclivities that the cross should not be carried in procession had, in his anti-Papal zeal, missed the essentials of Christianity itself. But when the congregation sang 'Onward, Christian Soldiers' they at least drew attention to the important omission by substituting for the well-known lines the altered phrasing, 'With the cross of Jesus Left behind the door.'

If the eventual goal of mankind was the attainment of the status of Superman, the motive force by which he might hope eventually to attain it was, according to Nietzsche, the Will to Power. Others, such as Herbert Spencer, saw in life merely activity or the evidence of the struggle for existence. Nietzsche maintained that the dominant characteristic of man was this Will to Power.

Hearken now (he says) to my word, ye wise ones. Test it seriously if I have crept into the heart of life itself, and into the roots of its heart. Wherever I find a living being, I find the Will to Power, and

even in the will of him who serves I find the will to be master.

Nietzsche enlarges very extensively on this idea. He, however, rather dogmatises than brings evidence to prove his position, nor is it a position at all easy to establish. The evidence points rather to the fact that the Will to Power in at all a developed state exists only in the few, and that for the vast majority the impulse of life is merely a general one towards self-expression, or the seeking for pleasure on the lines of least resistance. Indeed, in a very large part of the race, the Will to Power is quite manifestly lacking. Attention was drawn in the papers only recently to the fact of the great number of suicides that were taking place through sheer fear of responsibility. Reference was made to people who had been promoted to positions of trust which they did not feel themselves equal to fill, and who had had recourse to suicide in order to escape from them. The case of the lady doctor who committed suicide in Richmond Park rather than perform her first operation will probably be fresh in the minds of most of us. But this is only one instance out of many.

One feels doubt at times as to whether Nietzsche really believed in the probability of the fulfilment of his own philosophical anticipations. There is a curious page or two in his most celebrated work, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, entitled *The Eternal Return*, which almost suggests that what the German philosopher really believed in was an endless circuit of perpetual repetitions on the part of Nature, and that the Superman of his dreams was what he desired rather than what he anticipated.

Everything departs (he says), everything returns. The wheel of existence rolls eternally. All dies. All revives again. The year of existence runs eternally. All disintegrates. All is integrated anew. The like house of existence builds itself eternally. All separates, all returns to itself again. The ring of existence remains true to itself eternally.

At this point one is almost inclined to suppose that Nietzsche has adopted the doctrine of Reincarnation; but no, he explains that this is not in reality his meaning. It is merely the perpetual circle, the endless repetition of similar phenomena without real change, and without real progress.

‘Now I die and disappear,’ his animals, by whom he was attended in Nietzsche’s parable, represented Zarathustra as saying, ‘now I die and disappear, and in a moment I shall be nothing. Souls are as mortal as bodies, but the plexus of causes returns in which I am interlaced. It will create me again. I myself belong to the causes of the eternal second coming. I come again with this sun, with this earth, not to a new life or a better life, or a similar life. I come again eternally to this identical life. This self-same life in big and in little, to teach again the eternal second coming of all things, to speak again the word of the great noonday of earth and man, to make known the Superman once more to the human race.’

So that Nietzsche, when he completes the full circle of the wheel once more, will simply be grinding out the old tune on the old barrel organ again; and yet it will not be the original Nietzsche, but another Nietzsche that is identical in all respects with the first. When Zarathustra reflects on this eternal return he weeps, and no wonder; for it is the negation of all his hopes and ambitions.

‘Eternally he returns, the man of whom thou art weary, the petty man’ (he says to himself). At the thought of this the birth of human beings becomes a cavern to him, everything living becomes human dust and bones, and a mouldering past. ‘Alas, man

returns eternally, he echoes ; the petty man returns eternally.'

A man like Nietzsche is a portent, and ominous of some strange crisis in the civilisation in which he appears. Such men come to the fore in times of social and intellectual upheaval. Even though Nietzsche's revaluation of values was a false one, his demand for such a revaluation was by no means uncalled for. The position warranted it. The times demanded it. Nietzsche writes of this crisis :—

The greatest modern event, that God is dead, that the belief in the Christian God has become unworthy of belief, has now begun to cast its first shadows over Europe. To the few, at least, whose eye, whose suspecting glance is strong enough and subtle enough for the spectacle, a sun seems to have set to them, some old profound truth seems to have changed into doubt . . . . In the main, however, we may say that the event itself is far too great, too much beyond the power of apprehension of many people, for even the report of it to have reached them, to say nothing of their capacity for knowing what is really involved, and what must all collapse, now that this belief has been undermined, through having been built thereon, through having been buttressed thereby, through having been engrafted therein, as for example our entire European morality. The prolonged excess and continuation of demolition, ruin and overthrow which is now impending—who has yet understood it sufficiently to be obliged to stand up as the



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teacher and herald of such tremendously frightful logic, as the prophet of such overshadowing, of such a solar eclipse as has never happened on earth before ?

If Nietzsche misjudged the crisis, I do not think he over-estimated its importance. He grasped its importance, but not its import.

These great upheavals in the world of ideas are followed by or coincide with upheavals also in the social world. What is in front of us to-day? What new social and political developments may we anticipate? All the news tells of surprises and surprising developments in the relations of man to man, and in the laws which regulate them. It tells of new experiments seriously contemplated to-day which were laughed at as the outpourings of the idealists, of the dreamers, of the lunatics only yesterday. The political kaleidoscope is changing with a rapidity which bewilders the sagest prophet, which almost seems to defy prediction of what may happen on the morrow. It is as if an extinct volcano had suddenly become active, and as if its fellows might become active at any moment. Will democracy revive an effete civilisation or will it choke it?

Nietzsche had less than no sympathy with the new democratic ideals. He regarded the placing of power in any shape or form in the hands of a bare majority of the people as likely to swamp all true culture and all right thinking. More than this, he saw in the triumph of the many the obliteration and annihilation of the few choice spirits of the age. He anticipated, if it were not checked, the oncoming of a socialistic wave which should sweep away by its irresistible force all incentive to individual endeavour. It is too readily forgotten nowadays that democracy is a new political experiment, an experiment that still awaits justification, a justification that can only come—if it comes at all—after a lapse of at least several generations. Before the era of the French Revolution such democracy as we know to-day, that is, the government of a people by its elected representatives, was unknown. The only idea of a democracy which was contemplated by the ancient world was that of a small republic in which all the citizens were their own rulers, and entitled to vote in the house of representatives. Such a democracy was Athens; such a democracy was Rousseau's

ideal taken from his Genevese home. In the Roman republic the idea of representing the various centres of population by elected delegates never crossed the mind of either rulers or ruled. Readier means of locomotion have, of course, immensely facilitated the easy working of the democratic system, and thereby brought nearer home the ultimate results, whether for good or for evil, of this form of government.

Different countries have presented the effects of the system so far as it has been at present in operation, in very different, and, indeed, contrasting forms. While democracy in America has immensely favoured the growth of individualism and the consequent development of self-reliance on the part of each several member of the community, to the enormous gain of the prosperity of the country as a whole, the democratic experiment in Australia has had diametrically reverse results. Here legislation has tended more and more to hamper individuality, and to kill enterprise, with the result that a continent which should now be teeming with a white population of at least fifty millions, is, through nine-tenths of its area, a forsaken desert. The attempt

to control the rate of wages by legislation has been followed by an effort now being made to control also the prices at which commodities shall be sold. The socialistic ideals which are being put in practice there are meeting with their inevitable result: bankruptcy has already once stared Australia in the face, and if the present methods are continued, it will inevitably do so again. The point, however, as far as we are concerned here, is that under such conditions there is no incentive whatever to effort, and without some such incentive there is no possibility of the development of what incentive alone produces: that is, of force and energy and capacity in the individual man. It has been the pride of democracies that they offer each individual among the people, as far as may be, an equal opportunity. The socialistic republic, as far as we have seen it in operation hitherto, has merely offered an equality of lack of opportunity and discouragement to individual initiative.

Contrast with this state of things, the conditions prevailing in the United States of America. Here every boy at the 'public schools' regards himself as a possible future president. He sees nothing between him-

self and the highest aims of his ambition, excepting the limitations of his own capacity. Hence an atmosphere of hopefulness, engendered by a sense of limitless possibility, is apparent throughout the Great Republic. The first sight to greet the stranger entering the harbour of New York is the statue of Liberty enlightening the world. Though this is, perhaps, no great work of art, it is nevertheless a symbol of tremendous import. People tell us that symbols are inanimate objects without potency. This one symbol seems to me to condense within itself the whole secret of America's ideal and America's genius for success. No such symbol greets the voyager going to Australia. If it did, it would appear as a satire rather than a symbol.

A similar menace to that which threatens Australia is held by many to threaten England to-day. I do not express an opinion as to whether this is so or not, but the pessimists tell us that before long all those whose energy and enterprise makes the greatness of our island community, will be driven where energy and enterprise meet their fitting reward.

The word 'Radical' has a double meaning.

It has a connotation (and this is its true sense) in which it is merely synonymous with the word Occultist. The Radical in this sense is the man who goes to the *root*\* of things, one who endeavours to get to the bottom of whatever problem he has in hand, the man to whom the essential is everything and the superficial nothing. He does not accept the popular interpretation. He does not accept the surface valuation. He deliberately seeks out the inner meaning of the thing signified. If it is a question of a popular grievance he does not try superficial remedies which will leave a concealed wound beneath, but, in order to remedy the wrong, seeks out the causes that gave it birth. There is, unfortunately, another kind of Radical, who is far too superficial to go to the root of any grievances with a view to remedying them. The only sense in which this class of politician can be called radical is through his desire to tear up by the roots any institutions that appear for the moment to stand in the way of his party's majority. It is this class of politician that threatens us with the danger

\* Latin *radix* = a root.

of being reduced from a nation of men to a community of units. This is the danger which Nietzsche, and not Nietzsche alone, foresaw — the danger of a universal low level of mediocrity, in which capacity shall count for nothing, and all forms of genius shall be condemned.

Democracy, whatever form it takes, or on whatever lines it evolves, is at best only a *pis aller*, a substitute for a more satisfactory form of government which mankind so far has been unable to discover. Tennyson asks pessimistically, 'When the schemes and all the systems, kingdoms and republics fall,' will mankind have learned to evolve some better kind of government and polity?

Something kindlier, higher, holier,  
All for each, and each for all?

If mankind ever succeeds in doing so it will surely be through the pursuit of the Occult Ideal, an ideal in which the individualist and the socialist elements play their proper part. All have tried their hand in turn at reforming the State and regenerating the People. The Churches have tried and failed, the Statesmen have tried and failed, the Philosophers have tried

and failed, the Idealists have tried and failed, the Politicians—have failed. The opportunity of the Occultists is perhaps not so far off as most people suppose.

Occultism has no meaning apart from the ideal of the Brotherhood of Man. All Occultists in turn have voiced this idea. Laurence Oliphant voiced it in his celebrated lines. Speaking of Truth, the Truth at which the Occultist aims, that Truth which is no barren statement of dry facts, but a life-giving, all-embracing Reality, he exclaims—

Oh, She will gladly give Her hand  
And fondly cling to his embrace,  
Whose love is passionate and grand  
*For all the stricken human race!*

The attainment of Christhood is an ideal which is meaningless apart from sympathy with the whole of humanity. The Christ, Anna Kingsford tells us,

Is smitten with the pains of all creatures and His heart is pierced with their wounds. There is no offence done and He suffers not, nor any wrong and He is not hurt thereby. For His heart is in the breast of every creature and His blood in the veins of all flesh. For to know perfectly is to love perfectly, and so to love is to be partaker in the pain of the beloved.



It is not through the struggle between rich and poor, the constant warfare between capital and labour, that the millennium will come upon earth. It will only be, in the words of Herron, 'through the misery of the world's disinherited becoming the spiritual misery of the world's elect.' As long as men's minds are set alone on the struggle for material advantage, the Kingdom of Heaven on earth will continue to recede into dimmer and dimmer distance. People talk glibly about 'a new heaven and a new earth,' and the possibilities under changed political conditions of some replica of the Golden Age as part of the future of the world's destiny; but these people are apt to forget that the Golden Age was, in spite of its name, that period in the world's history in which the lust for gold was unknown.

## THE STRANGE CASE OF LURANCY VENNUM

THE investigations of Dr Morton Prince, Dr Boris Sidis and others into the anomalies of personality have brought before the notice of the public problems of a singularly intricate character, no certain solution of which is to be found in their own writings. They present to us various cases, which have been under long and careful observation and the evidence for which is the best that science can obtain, wherein the subjects of this scientific observation are found to act and to think at various periods of their lives as totally distinct and separate individuals, having in certain of the cases no knowledge or recollection of what was done or said by them when under the influence of their normal personality. Neither, on the other hand, does the normal personality appear conscious of the actions or mode of life of

the abnormal except by inference from results, or through being subsequently informed by others. To the normal personality the periods of abnormality present themselves merely as blanks in the life, of which memory takes no record. To the abnormal personality the normal periods present themselves frequently in the same manner, though this is not invariably the case. As, for instance, in the case of Miss Beauchamp, recorded by Dr Morton Prince, the sub-personality 'Sally' is aware of the acts of Miss Beauchamp, while Miss Beauchamp has no concurrent consciousness of the doings of 'Sally.'

It is obvious that cases of this kind raise at once the whole problem of the nature of the personality. If the personality tenanted a single body is capable of being split up (as the evidence in certain of these instances shows to be the case) into a number of independent, dissimilar and dissociated consciousnesses, what guarantee have we for our belief in the permanence of the personality either before or subsequent to what we call Death? Does not the personality appear to present itself, where such cases are concerned, as a sort of temporary alliance

of heterogeneous elements, liable, under pressure of circumstances or conditions of physical suffering, to eventual dissolution and dissociation? Where does the unifying principle come in except in conditions which, in view of the facts revealed to us, are not necessarily of a permanent character? And, if this is so, what does the ego amount to?

I am putting the position in this interrogative form not because I desire to draw my readers on to premature conclusions, which their own intuitive judgment may contradict, but because I wish to make plain what important problems, going to the very root of the meaning of life and consciousness, these investigations into the question of personality raise, and how all important to the psychical investigator the evidence in connection with such abnormal conditions must prove. Indeed, it is obvious that the conclusions we draw from it may well revolutionize the whole of our outlook upon life.

The majority of these cases of so-called multiple personality will be most naturally explained—whatever deduction we may ultimately draw from the *possibility* of such occurrences—as merely instances of the

breaking and mending of the common unifying consciousness of the whole, through shock or injury to the brain centres, though such explanation may not carry us as far as we are at first inclined to think. There are, however, other cases in which, if the evidence be accepted at its face value, this explanation inevitably breaks down. Such an instance is that of the remarkable series of occurrences which took place at Watseka, Illinois, some thirty years ago, the whole episode connected with which has become known under the name of 'The Watseka Wonder.'\* The facts of the case, which were made public through the instrumentality of the Rev. B. F. Austin, of Rochester, N.Y., were carefully investigated and confirmed, among other people of note, by the late Dr Richard Hodgson. It is obvious, therefore, that the occurrences merit *prima facie* the careful attention of the scientific researcher.

This very curious record deals with the (supposedly) abnormal relations subsisting

\* *The Watseka Wonder.* By E. W. Stevens, M.D. with Introduction by J. M. Peebles M.D. Austin Publishing Co., Rochester, New York. William Rider & Son, Ltd., 164, Aldersgate Street, London, E.C., 1s. 6d. net.

for a period of upwards of three months between Mary Lurancy Vennum, known to her friends as Lurancy or 'Rancy,' and Mary Roff. Lurancy Vennum was the daughter of Thomas Vennum and Lavinda his wife, who were married in Fayette Co. Iowa, in 1855, Lurancy being born on April 16, 1864, in Milford township, seven miles south of Watseka. In 1871 the family moved to Watseka, and there became near neighbours of the family of A. B. Roff, the father of the Mary Roff above alluded to. The proximity of the Roffs and the Vennums did not, however, lead to any intimacy until the circumstances about to be narrated brought the two families in contact, though it appears that on one occasion Mrs Roff had called on Mrs Vennum, so that they were not without knowledge of each other's existence and whereabouts. Up to the year 1877, when this story opens, Lurancy Vennum, then a girl of thirteen, had enjoyed excellent health, but in the summer of this year she became subject to fits, succeeded by trances, in which she appeared to see and converse with her brother and sister, who were dead, and other spirit acquaintances. This condition passed

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off temporarily, but merely to be followed by symptoms of a more serious character.

Commencing November 27, 1877, she was attacked with a most violent pain in her stomach some five or six times a day and for two weeks she had the most excruciating pains. . . . At the end of two weeks of these attacks she became unconscious and passed into a queer trance, and as at former times would describe heaven and spirits, often calling them angels. From this time on until February 1, 1878, she would have these trances and sometimes a seemingly real obsession, from three to eight, and sometimes as many as twelve times a day, lasting from one to eight hours, occasionally passing into a state of ecstasy in which she claimed to be in heaven.

Up to this date Lurancy Vennum had been under the care of two local medical practitioners of the recognised allopathic school. The gravity of the case, however, and the remarkable character of the phenomena that accompanied it, led to considerable talk in the locality, and various suggestions were made as to what should be done with the unfortunate girl. One party, headed by the Methodist minister of the place, urged the desirability of confining her in a neighbouring lunatic asylum, and it was to prevent this course being taken that Mr and Mrs Roff, then almost strangers to the family, intervened in a spirit

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of pure charity toward the unfortunate girl. Mr Roff enjoyed the acquaintance of a Dr E. W. Stevens, of Janesville, Wis., in whose capacity to deal with such cases he had great faith. After some persuasion the parents consented to the new medico being brought in, and he duly appeared, accompanied by Mr Roff, on the afternoon of January 31, 1878. Here the record may be allowed to speak for itself :—

The girl sat near the stove, in a common chair, her elbows on her knees, her hands under her chin, feet curled up on the chair, eyes staring, looking every way like an "old hag." She sat for a time in silence, until Dr Stevens moved his chair, when she savagely warned him not to come nearer. She appeared sullen and crabbed, calling her father "Old Black Dick" and her mother "Old Granny." She refused to be touched, even to shake hands, and was reticent and sullen with all save the doctor, with whom she entered freely into conversation, giving her reasons for doing so. She said he was a spiritual doctor and would understand her.

When he asked her name she quickly replied :

'Katrine Hogan.'

'How old?'

'Sixty-three years.'

'Where from?'

'Germany.'

'How long ago?'

'Three days.'

'How did you come?'

'Through the air.'



Later on she claimed to be Willie Canning a young man who ran away from home, got into difficulties and finally lost his life and was now here because he 'wanted to be.' Then, wearying of telling about herself she took to cross-questioning the doctor, Mr Roff and her own father about their family history and ways of life and passing caustic comments on their replies. When the visitors rose to go, the girl also got up, flung up her hands and fell upon the floor in a condition of absolute rigidity. Whereupon the doctor 'took her hands, which were like iron bars,' and by 'magnetic action' and a knowledge of 'the laws of spiritual science,' 'was soon in full and free communication with the sane and happy mind of Lurancy Vennum herself, who conversed with the grace and sweetness of an angel, declaring herself to be in heaven.'

As to whether the effects produced were due to Dr Stevens' knowledge of spiritual laws, as stated in the narrative, or whether the fit had taken its normal course and worn itself out, we need not trouble ourselves at the moment to enquire. In any case, with the return of the consciousness of Lurancy Vennum in a still hypnotic or sub-

conscious state, the doctor found himself in a position to deal with the situation in an effective manner. Accepting the standpoint of his patient, who expressed her regret at being the victim of such evil controls, Dr Stevens suggested to her that if some form of control was unavoidable it might be possible to make choice of a spirit for the purpose who would exercise a beneficent rather than a malign influence. Lurancy acquiesced, and in response to a further suggestion proceeded to make inquiries among the spirits by whom she claimed to be surrounded. After stating that 'there are a great many spirits here who would be glad to come,' she proceeded to give names and descriptions of a number of persons long since deceased. 'But,' she added, 'there is one the angels desire to come, and she wants to come. Her name is Mary Roff.' At this Mr Roff exclaimed, 'That is my daughter. She has been in heaven twelve years. Let her come. We'll be glad to have her.'

The occurrence may be ascribed by the sceptic to the hypnotic suggestion of the doctor, but the fact remains that when Lurancy Vennum awoke the next morning

she awoke sane and healthy enough, but in the personality of Mary Roff.\* Her own family were strangers to her, she showed the most evident symptoms of home sickness and begged to be allowed to 'go home' to her parents, the Roffs.

From the wild, angry, ungovernable girl . . . or the rigid corpse-like cataleptic . . . the girl had now become mild, docile, polite and timid, knowing none of the family but constantly pleading to go home. The best wisdom of the family was used to convince her that she was at home and must remain. Weeping she would not be pacified and only found contentment in going back to heaven, as she said, for short visits.

Of how Mrs Roff and her daughter Mrs Minerva Alter came to call, and how the girl exclaimed that they were her mother and 'her sister Nervie' and promptly proceeded to throw her arms round their necks ; how the Vennums finally reluctantly consented to let her go 'home,' and how she spent three and a half months with the Roffs in happiness and contentment, recognising and remembering every one and calling to mind numberless forgotten incidents, those who like to read the original

\* It is noteworthy that Mary Roff in her lifetime was subject to a similar form of obsession to that of which Lurancy Vennum was a victim.

narrative can satisfy themselves. Also how the Rev Mr Baker said to Mr Vennum, 'I think you will see the time when you will wish you had sent her to the asylum,' and how one of the religious relatives of the family remarked, 'I would sooner follow a girl of mine to the grave than have her go to the Roffs and be made a "spiritualist."' Also how Dr Jewett dubbed the condition 'catalepsy number two,' and how he added with more practical intelligence, 'Humour her whims and she will get well.' All this, and much more, will be found, which goes to show that however remarkable the records we meet with, and however incredible the incidents recorded, they all illustrate certain unvarying characteristics of human nature, which are equally brought out whether the subject under discussion involves a reconsideration of the laws of nature or a readjustment of Mrs John Jones' domestic arrangements as a result of the dismissal of her last cook. And probably if one had listened to the tittle-tattle at the corners of the streets in the villages of Galilee in the times of Jesus of Nazareth, the comments on the subject of his miraculous cures would have been equally edifying.

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Of the nature of the evidence for the identifying of the girl with Mary Roff a single incident may be here recorded, though the evidence of Mr Roff himself, to whom every day of her presence would inevitably supply countless indications, is probably the most valuable. We find him writing to Dr Stevens at the time, 'Mary is perfectly happy. She recognises everybody and everything that she knew twelve years ago. She knows nobody nor anything that is known by Lurancy.'

One evening in the latter part of March Mr Roff was sitting in the room waiting for tea, "Mary" being out in the yard. He asked Mrs Roff if she could find a certain velvet head-dress that Mary used to wear the last year before she died. If so, to lay it on the stand and say nothing about it, to see if Mary would recognise it. Mrs Roff readily found and laid it on the stand. The girl soon came in and immediately exclaimed as she approached the stand: "Oh, there is my head-dress I wore when my hair was short!" She then asked, "Ma, where is my box of letters? Have you got them yet?" Mrs Roff replied, "Yes, Mary, I have some of them." She at once got the box with Mary's letters in it. As Mary began to examine them she said, "Oh, Ma, here is a collar I tatted! why did you not show me my letters and things before?" The collar had been preserved among the relics of the lamented child as one of the beautiful things her fingers had wrought before Lurancy was born.

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When the time came for Lurancy to repossess her body the Roffs had due warning from the temporary tenant. On May 20 she announced to her father, weeping, 'Oh, pa, I am going to heaven to-morrow at eleven o'clock, and Rancy is coming back cured and going home all right.' . . . 'I feel sad at parting with you all, for you have treated me so kindly ; you have helped me by your sympathy to cure this body, and Rancy can come and inhabit it.'

This truly extraordinary narrative ends with the record of the fulfilment of this prediction and certain facts with regard to the after life of Lurancy Vennum, who, I understand, is still alive and the mother of a large family. She remembers little of the past and rarely alludes to it except occasionally in referring to what 'Mary had said to her.' The main actor in the drama, Mary Roff, has, needless to say, not been heard of since the termination of her brief errand of mercy to this terrestrial sphere.

To expect general credit to be given to a record of the nature of 'the Watseka Wonder' would argue little knowledge of average human nature. It may be, however, submitted not without some show of

reason that the very large number of those who express belief in or at least 'toy' with the doctrine of Reincarnation have to face in such an hypothesis greater difficulties than confront the believer in obsession—that is to say, in the occupation of a body not dead but temporarily tenantless, by a spirit at the time without a body. Psychical Researchers are faced with grave difficulties in accepting 'Sally' as part of the dissociated consciousness of Miss Beauchamp in Dr Morton Prince's famous case, though this, Dr Prince informs me, is his own view. To explain 'Mary Roff' by such a theory is to deny the evidence wholesale. Doubtless, however, this is the course that will find favour with many of those who read this singular narrative.

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Who has not heard of Cagliostro? And yet who but a few students have any real knowledge of that mysterious character, of whom it may be said, as it was of Melchizedek, that he had 'neither beginning of life nor end of days.' Both, at least, like the king of Salem's, are wrapped in uncertainty, and though popular tradition, repeated again and again by the uncritical historian, has identified Cagliostro's early life with that of the Italian scoundrel, Joseph Balsamo, the evidence\* seems to point, as his latest biographer indicates, to the fact that the two had no connection whatever with one another, beyond having married Italian wives with the same surname.†—and that by no means an uncommon one. From what we know of Balsamo it may fairly be said that two people more opposite in character

\* See *Count Cagliostro*, by W. R. Trowbridge. Chapman & Hall.

† The Christian name of Balsamo's wife was Lorenza, of Cagliostro's Seraphina. But the story is itself of doubtful authenticity.



than himself and Count Cagliostro would be difficult to discover. It must, however, be admitted that Goethe took a different view, and interviewed people of the name of Balsamo, who alleged that they were his relatives. The narrative, however, has a very suspicious look, and mercenary motives may well have led to an imposition being practised. Goethe, it will be noted, had to employ an interpreter.\*

Cagliostro's whole career, as far as we know it, shows a character in which generosity is perpetually being carried to the verge of folly. His credulity was constantly making him the dupe of designing knaves, in whose honesty he placed a pathetic faith, and had he ever had the misfortune to encounter his alter ego, a common rogue of the most ordinary type, it is safe to predict that he would not have escaped from his clutches till he had been fleeced of the bulk of his possessions. As late as the date of his trial in the affair of the Diamond Necklace, no suggestion of the identity of the two char-

\* Those who would identify the two bring forward also the argument that Balsamo had an uncle, Cagliostro, whose name suggested the title. I do not know if this can be confirmed.

acters was even mooted. The story appears to owe its origin to the fertile brain of one of the greatest scoundrels of whom European history holds record, the notorious black-mailer, Theveneau de Morande.

A short *resumé* of this arch-villain's history will, under the circumstances, be not without interest. Theveneau de Morande was born in 1741, the son of a lawyer, at Arnay-le-Duc, in Burgundy. As a boy he was arrested for theft in a house of ill-fame. Subsequently he enlisted, obtained his discharge through his father's intervention, found himself once more in prison at For-l'Evêque, and was then confined in a convent at Armentières, from which he was released two years after at the age of four-and-twenty. Having shortly after lampooned one of the members of the government, he was compelled to fly the country and took refuge in England, where he arrived in a state of destitution.

Needs must when the devil drives, and, the pinch of poverty sharpening his wits, he now turned his attention to the blackmailing business, in the pursuit of which he was soon to evince a quite uncommon aptitude and adroitness. His talents in this direction were ably seconded by a facile pen and a command

of vituperative language and personal abuse which the author of the letters to Junius could scarcely have outdone. His first effort of importance in this direction was *Le Gazetier Cuirassé, ou Anecdotes Scandaleuses sur le Cour de France*. Those who would not purchase immunity by a lump sum down had their characters and private lives mercilessly torn to pieces in its pages. The book is said to have brought him £1,000. An attempt to blackmail Voltaire was less successful. The veteran *philosophe* published the blackmailer's letter with satiric comments of his own. The blackmailer's path has indeed its ups and downs, and once he was fain to accept a horsewhipping and publish an abject apology, the price extorted by an offended French nobleman. Madame du Barry, however, Louis XV's notorious favourite, was made of other stuff, and in consequence the *Memoires d'une Femme Publique*, compared with which *Le Gazetier Cuirassé* was said to have been 'rosewater,' were never published. Morande accepted the sum of 32,000 livres in solatium for his wounded literary *amour propre*. Before, however, paying him his price the French Government had attempted to kidnap the

audacious libeller. This was the ancient substitute for the more prosaic extradition methods of modern times. The plot, however, failed. With a dexterity worthy of a better cause, Morande, warned in time, was able to pose in the English press as a political exile and avenger of public morality. The sympathy of the susceptible public responded warmly to the unscrupulous appeal, and the representatives of French authority escaped with difficulty from the clutches of an infuriated London mob.

It not unfrequently happens with countries that have been at war, that the signature of the treaty of peace is followed after no long lapse of time by a formal alliance between the erstwhile foes, there being obviously two methods of gaining one's ends, the method of grab and the method of give and take, and the failure of the one suggesting the advisability of adopting the other. So at least reasoned the French Government, and the payment of Morande's price was followed in due course by his employment on behalf of the said Government, in the capacity of subsidized journalist, and spy. Morande was nothing loth to come to terms, and eventually blossomed out into the Editor of the *Courier*

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*de l'Europe*. This journal, originally started by Latour under the ægis of the French Government, was soon read in every corner of Europe. This was the weapon which of all others the blackmailer desired for his purposes. 'In it,' says Brisset, 'he tore to pieces the most estimable people, and manufactured, or caused to be manufactured, articles to ruin any one whom he feared.'

Cagliostro had—all unwittingly—made dire enemies of the French Court through his acquittal in the trial over the Diamond Necklace affair. To acquit Cagliostro, who had no more to do with the matter in question than the man in the moon, appeared from the royal standpoint to be tantamount to incriminating the Queen, on whom, in fact, suspicion long and not unnaturally rested. Morande, therefore, received his instructions from Paris to ruin Cagliostro's reputation. The means ready to his hand was the *Courier de l'Europe*. Hence the story of Joseph Balsamo and his identification with the *soi-disant* Count Cagliostro. To say that the authority hardly seems adequate is surely to put it mildly. And yet Carlyle, and others before and after him, have quietly accepted the statement of the paid black-

mailer as sufficient evidence of the character and history of his victim!

Who, then, was Cagliostro? The answer to this question must ever remain among the unsolved problems of history. There is, however, no reason to dismiss as incredible—even if there is reason to doubt—the account which he gave of himself on the occasion of the ‘Diamond Necklace’ trial. From what we know of Cagliostro we may, I think, say that his character was far too ingenuous for him to have been likely to invent so remarkable a tale. Everything, however, in his history points to the fact that he was just the person to take a record of the kind and colour it with the hues of his own fertile imagination. In any case the impartial historian, while dismissing as incredible the Balsamo fiction, is bound to give some weight—however slight—to the only evidence on the subject we possess which is not manifestly untrue. Cagliostro, however, himself did not pretend to have knowledge of his parentage. ‘I cannot,’ he states, ‘speak positively as to the place of my nativity, nor as to the parents who gave me birth. All my inquiries have ended only in giving me some great notions, it is true,

but altogether vague and uncertain concerning my family.' The gist, however, of his story was that he spent his childhood in Arabia, where he was brought up under the name of Acherat. He had then, he states, four persons attached to his service—the chief of whom was a certain Althotas, a man between fifty-five and sixty years of age. This man (whom it has been attempted to identify with a certain Kölmer, a Jutland merchant, who had travelled extensively and had the reputation of being a master-magician) informed Cagliostro that he had been left an orphan when three months old, and that his parents were Christian and nobly born. All his attempts, however, to discover the secret of his birth were doomed to disappointment. The matter was one which was treated as taboo. In his twelfth year (to follow his own story) he left Medina for Mecca, where he remained three years, until, wearying of the monotonous round of the Cherif's Court, he obtained leave to travel.

One day (he narrates), when I was alone, the prince entered my apartment; he strained me to his bosom with more than usual tenderness, bid me never cease to adore the Almighty and added, bedewing my cheeks with his tears: 'Nature's unfortunate child, adieu!'

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From this date commenced, according to his own account, Cagliostro's travels, first in company with Althotas, for whom he ever expressed the warmest affection, afterwards with the wife whom he chose for himself in Italy. For upwards of three years he claims to have travelled through Egypt, Africa and Asia, finally reaching the island of Rhodes in the year 1766, and thence embarking on a French ship bound for Malta. Here he and his guardian were received with all honour, Pinto, the Grand Master of the Knights of Malta, giving them apartments in his palace.

It was here (he notes) that I first assumed European dress and with it the name of Count Cagliostro; nor was it a small matter of surprise to me to see Althotas appear in a clerical dress with the insignia of the Order of Malta.

The Grand Master Pinto was apparently acquainted with Cagliostro's history. He often spoke to him, he says, of the Cherif, but always refused to be 'drawn' on the subject of his real origin and birth. He treated him, however, with every consideration and endeavoured to induce him to 'take the cross,' promising him a great career and rapid preferment if he would consent to do so. Cagliostro's love of travelling and of



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the study of medicine drew him in another direction, and on the death of his guardian, Althotas, which occurred shortly after, he left Malta for ever. After visiting Sicily and the Greek Archipelago in company with the Chevalier d'Aquino he proceeded thence to Naples, where he took leave of his companion. Provided with a letter of credit on the banking house of Signor Bellone he left Naples for Rome, where his destiny awaited him in the shape of Seraphina Feliciani, who shortly after became his wife, and to whom he showed throughout his married life a most unflinching devotion.\* Cagliostro states that he was then (anno 1770) in his twenty-second year, and he appears to have continued to pursue that nomadic life which was so dear to him, travelling from town to town on the continent of Europe till he at length emerges into the light of day in the city of London, in the month of July, 1776, in furnished apartments, in Whitcombe Street, Leicester Fields. London seems always to have been an unfortunate place for Cagliostro, and here he was destined, on the first of many occa-

\* It may be noted in this connection that Joseph Balsamo got his wife locked up in jail, besides beating her and compelling her to lead a life of immorality.

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sions, to become the victim of his own too trustful and generous disposition and to be fleeced by a nest of rogues, who took advantage of a foreigner entirely ignorant of London, of the greater part of his possessions. Eventually he was rescued from this gang of knaves by a good Samaritan in the shape of a certain O'Reilly. Now O'Reilly was a prominent member of the Esperance Lodge of Freemasons, and here we first find Cagliostro brought into contact with that celebrated secret society, his connection with which was destined to play so all-important a part in the subsequent years of his life. O'Reilly, it appears, was the proprietor of the *King's Head*, in Gerard Street, where the Esperance Lodge assembled, and it was only natural that one so fascinated with the occult as Cagliostro should be readily persuaded by his benefactor and rescuer to become initiated into the order of Freemasons. It is not necessary here to follow in detail the sordid intrigues of which, during his sojourn in England, he was made the victim. He was, however, glad eventually to escape from the country, with 'no more than £50 and some jewels' in his possession, having lost in all, through fraud and conse-

quent legal proceedings, some 3,000 guineas during his sojourn. Cagliostro's star, however, had not yet set and his all too brief spell of fame and triumph was still in front of him. Providence, in the shape probably of the emissaries of Freemasonry, was waiting at Brussels to replenish his purse, and the same Providence, probably in the same guise, replenished it many times afterwards with no niggardly hand.

From Brussels to The Hague, from The Hague to Nuremberg, from Nuremberg to Berlin, from Berlin to Leipzig, we trace the Count's peregrinations, gathering fame and founding Egyptian Masonic Lodges as he went. It is true he met with setbacks and reverses, and the capital of Frederick the Great would have none of him, but it is clear that, in spite of these, his credit and reputation as a healer and clairvoyant grew steadily in volume. It was, in fact, on these two gifts that his fame rested. Though he claimed to have been taught the secrets of occultism by Althotas, or to have learned them from the Egyptian priests, there is no evidence\* throughout the records of his

\* Unless indeed we accept the (doubtful) story of his transmuting metals for de Rohan.

career of his possessing anything but a smattering of such abstruse knowledge, and on several occasions, notably at St Petersburg, there is something more than a suspicion that his attempt to make good his claim to the name of occultist involved him in serious humiliation and rebuffs. The tales, however, of his predictions and their fulfilments were handed on from mouth to mouth, doubtless losing nothing on the way, while his reputation as a healer and the stories of the cures which he effected assured a perfect furore of enthusiasm in every fresh town to which he paid a visit. He took advantage of this enthusiasm to found fresh Masonic Lodges in all directions, and, while he consistently refused to receive payment of any kind for his cures, the shekels of an endless file of initiate converts poured into the coffers at the headquarters of Egyptian Masonry. Never was man at once more lavish with money and more indifferent to the comforts which money brings. 'He slept in an armchair,' said Madame d'Oberkirch contemptuously, 'and lived on cheese.' Whatever he spent, however, he appeared to draw from an inexhaustible widow's cruise. As in spite of his refusal to accept fees, he

paid his own bills with the greatest promptitude, the problem whence this continuous stream of gold flowed excited unbounded curiosity, and many were the fantastic stories invented to account for it.

Meanwhile, after visiting Mittau, where he was enthusiastically taken up by Marshal von Medem, the head of the Masonic Lodge at that place, he passed on to Petersburg, Warsaw, and thence to Strassburg. Here he was destined to enjoy a great triumph and to win a powerful friend, who was eventually, through a pure accident, to prove the cause of his undoing. This was none other than the notorious Cardinal de Rohan. It is hardly necessary to state that the ecclesiastical dignitary of the eighteenth century in France was not selected for his high office by reason of his exemplary life or his Christian virtues. To neither of these did Cardinal de Rohan make any claim. Yet honours had fallen thick and fast upon him. He was Bishop of Strassburg, Grand Almoner of France, Cardinal, Prince of the Empire, Landgrave of Alsace, in addition to being abbot of the richest abbey in France, the Abbey of St Waast Handsune. Of fascinating manner, an aristocrat of the

aristocrats, there was no position in the kingdom to which he did not feel justified in aspiring. The fact that he enjoyed a reputation for dissipation and extravagance did not appear calculated to tell against him in such an age.

Surprising as it may seem, the Cardinal combined with a pleasure-loving disposition a passion for alchemy and the pursuit of the occult sciences, and the arrival of Cagliostro at Strassburg naturally enough excited his interest to no small degree. The Cardinal determined to lose no time in making the acquaintance of the man about whom and whose marvellous cures the whole town was already talking almost before he set foot in its streets. But Cagliostro was inclined to ride the high horse. 'If the Cardinal is ill,' he replied to the great man's messenger, 'let him come to me and I will cure him. If not, he has no need of me nor I of him.' In spite of the Count's stand-offishness, the Cardinal was not to be denied, and the acquaintance once made soon ripened into the closest intimacy. Cagliostro was told to consider the palace his own, and he and his wife resided there on the footing of the most honoured guests. Marvellous tales are told

of the results of his experiments in the Cardinal's laboratory, how he manufactured gold and jewels, and finally showed de Rohan in the crystal the form of the woman whom he had loved. It is on these stories alone that the reputation of Cagliostro as an alchemist really rests, and in the absence of further confirmatory evidence one is inclined to take them with a grain of salt. However this may be, it is certain that the Cardinal was completely won over, and Cagliostro took care not to lose caste by assuming airs of humility or deference. Never, certainly, was there less of a snob than this marvellous adventurer. 'Cagliostro,' says Madame d'Oberkirch, 'treated him and his other distinguished admirers as if they were under the deepest obligation to him; but he under none whatever to them.' As usual, our hero was besieged at Strassburg by those who would profit by his medical knowledge and skill as a healer, for he really appears to have possessed both, and as usual by obliging his clients he incurred the inveterate hostility of the medical profession. In all ages of the world's history the natural healer has had the doctor as his enemy and the prophet,

the priest. Orthodoxy has ever closed its ranks against those who poach on its preserves. Doubtless it is the natural instinct of self-defence. For Cagliostro, however, it was extremely inconvenient. The people would throng his doorsteps to be cured and make him heal them willy-nilly, and the medical profession were equally determined to make each place in which he practised his medical skill too hot for him. Others might have been willing to let the dogs bark, but a fatal sensitiveness to criticism made the Count an all too easy target for their venom. They drove him from Strassburg as they had driven him from other places, in spite of the entreaties of de Rohan, who pressed him to stay and disregard their clamour.

We need not follow Cagliostro from Strassburg to Bordeaux and from Bordeaux to Lyons, where he added further laurels to his reputation and founded further Lodges of Egyptian Masonry. He might have remained indefinitely to all appearance at the latter place if it had not been for the solicitations of Cardinal de Rohan, who urged him to respond to the appeals of Parisian Society and visit the gay capital, where he guaranteed him an enthusiastic



reception. He even sent a special messenger to back his request, and perhaps Cagliostro himself had heard the capital of cultured Europe a-calling. Anyhow he came, his evil fate—if not Paris—summoning him. Cagliostro declared that he took the greatest precaution, on arriving there, to avoid causing ill-will. However this may be, he immediately became ‘the rage’ in fashionable circles; people flocked to him by hundreds to be cured, and the stories of the miracles which he was supposed to have effected were the talk of every dinner-party in the capital. Mesmer had already left Paris with a fortune of 340,000 livres, made by his lucrative practice. Paris, craving for a new excitement, was ready to receive with open arms the wonder-worker of whom it was said that no one of all his patients ever succeeded in making him accept the least mark of gratitude.\*

Cagliostro was here surfeited with flattery. Houdin executed his bust. His statuettes were in every shop window. His portrait was in every house. Those who claimed to have been cured by him were met with

\* Grimm.

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on all sides. Angels, it was said, and heroes of Biblical story appeared at his séances. No story was too absurd for Paris to believe about him.

But a train of events in which he had no hand, and a catastrophe for which he had no responsibility, were destined, while wrecking other reputations and undermining the throne itself, to bring his career of triumph to a sudden and tragic close, and eventually to drive him, a forsaken and persecuted outcast, to his final doom. Cagliostro, as already stated, had nothing whatever to do with the affair of the Diamond Necklace. But for all that, he was caught in the web of deceit that an unscrupulous woman had woven to suit her own purposes.

The Countess de Lamotte - Valois, a descendant of a natural son of Henri II, and an adventuress of the most reckless type, had found a protector in the person of the susceptible Cardinal de Rohan. Now the Cardinal was by no means a *persona grata* at the Court of Versailles. As a matter of fact, he was never seen there except at the feast of the Assumption, when it was his duty as Grand Almoner to celebrate Mass in the Royal Chapel. The

cause of this was the enmity of Queen Marie Antoinette. The Cardinal had been recalled from the embassy at Vienna at the instance of her mother, Maria Theresa, and doubtless the mother had communicated to the daughter a distrust for the brilliant but pleasure-loving Cardinal. This was a fatal obstacle to de Rohan, whose ambition it was to become First Minister to the King. The Countess de Lamotte saw her chance in the thwarted ambitions of her protector, and took care to pose as an intimate friend of the Queen, a story to which her frequent visits to Versailles in connection with a petition for the recovery of some family property which had passed into the possession of the State, lent a certain appearance of truth. She represented to the Cardinal the interest the Queen took in him, but which matters of policy compelled her to dissemble. In the sequel a series of letters—of course forged—passed between de Rohan and the supposed Queen. The Queen, through the intermediary of the Countess, borrowed large sums of money of the Cardinal, which the Cardinal, on his part, being head over ears in debt in spite of his enormous income, was compelled to borrow of the Jews. Finally, when the Cardinal

was becoming suspicious the Countess arranged a bogus interview, at which another lady—admittedly remarkably like her—posed as the Queen, and permitted de Rohan to kiss her hand. Finally Madame de Lamotte got in touch with Böhmer, the owner of the famous necklace. This she represented to the Cardinal that the Queen had set her heart on obtaining, but could not, at a moment's notice, find the ready cash. Would he become security? Needless to say, de Rohan fell into the trap. The first instalment of the bill fell due, and the Cardinal, who had not expected to be called on to pay, was unable offhand to find the money. At this point Böhmer, feeling nervous, consulted one of the Queen's ladies-in-waiting, who informed him that the story of the Queen having bought the necklace was all moonshine. He then went to the Countess de Lamotte, who had the effrontery to say she believed he was being victimized, and advised him to go to the Cardinal, thinking, doubtless, that de Rohan would take the entire responsibility when the alternative was his ruin. The jeweller, however, instead of taking her advice, went straight to the King. The King immediately

communicated with the Queen, who was furious, and insisted on having the Cardinal arrested forthwith. The fat was now in the fire with a vengeance. The arrest of the Cardinal was followed by that of the Countess de Lamotte, of Cagliostro and his wife (whom the Countess in utter recklessness accused of the theft of the necklace), of the Baroness d'Oliva, who had 'played' the Queen, of de Vilette, the forger of the letters, and of various minor actors in this astounding drama.

In the celebrated trial that followed Cagliostro was acquitted, but not until he had spent nine months in the Bastille. There was, in fact, not a shadow of evidence against him. His wife was released before the trial took place. Cagliostro received an ovation from the people of Paris on the occasion of his release, as well as de Rohan, who was also acquitted, the popularity of the verdict being due to the hatred with which the Royal Family were now everywhere regarded. But on the day after, by a Royal edict, de Rohan was stripped of all his dignities and exiled to Auvergne, while Cagliostro was ordered to leave France within three weeks. The Count retired to England, fearful lest worse might befall him ;

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but even here the relentless malignity of the discredited Queen, who regarded his acquittal as equivalent to her own condemnation, followed his footsteps. The unscrupulous de Morande, as we have already seen, was paid by the Court to ruin his reputation and to identify him with the thief and gaol-bird, Joseph Balsamo. London was soon made so hot for him that he returned once more to the Continent and made his home for a short time in Switzerland. Later on he went to Trent, where the Prince-Bishop, who had a passion for alchemy, made him a welcome guest. But the Count's day was over, and misfortune continued to dog his footsteps. The Emperor Joseph II would not permit his vassal to harbour the man who had been mixed up in the Diamond Necklace affair, and the Bishop was reluctantly obliged to bid him begone. Cagliostro now found himself driven from pillar to post, his resources were at an end, and his friends were dead or had deserted him. He turned his steps towards Italy, and eventually arrived at Rome. Here his presence becoming known to the papal authorities, he and his wife were arrested as members of the Masonic Fraternity. In

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those days, within the Papal States Freemasonry was a crime punishable by death. After a mock trial the death-sentence in the case of Cagliostro, was commuted to imprisonment for life, while his wife was confined in a penitentiary.

Rumour which wove a web of romance round all his doings, did not leave him even here, and stories were circulated that he had escaped from his dungeon and was living in Russia. There appears, however, to be no doubt that neither Count nor Countess long survived their incarceration, and when the French soldiers invaded the Papal States in 1797 and the Polish Legion under General Daubrowski captured the fortress of San Leo, in which the Count had been confined, the officers who inquired after the once famous magician, hoping to set him free, were informed that it was too late and that he was already dead. The Queen, whose vindictive spite had ruined these two lives, went to her doom first ; but her instrument, the blackmailer Morande, retired to a quiet corner of France on his ill-gotten fortune, escaped the furies of the French Revolution, and ended his life surrounded by an atmosphere of the most unquestioned respectability.

And what of the man with whom not only his own fate, but the misrepresentations of history have dealt so hardly? What manner of man was he for whom even those who denounce him as mountebank might not unreasonably, one would think, feel a passing sympathy. On two points we have ample testimony. All those who knew him bore witness to the marvellous magnetism of his personality and to the fascination and beauty of his extraordinary eyes. 'No two eyes like his were ever seen,' says the Marquis de Crégny, 'and his teeth were superb.' 'He was not, strictly speaking, handsome,' says Madame d'Oberkirch, 'but I have never seen a more remarkable face. His glance was so penetrating that one might almost be tempted to call it supernatural. I could not describe the expression of his eyes; it was, so to speak, a mixture of flame and ice. It attracted and repelled at the same time, and whilst it inspired terror it aroused along with it an irresistible curiosity. I cannot deny,' she adds, 'that Cagliostro possessed an almost demoniacal power.' Not less noteworthy is the opinion of so hostile a witness as Beugnot, who confesses, while ridiculing him, that his face, his attire, the whole man



in fact, impressed him in spite of himself. 'If gibberish can be sublime,' he continues, 'Cagliostro was sublime. When he began speaking on a subject he seemed carried away with it, and spoke impressively in a ringing, sonorous voice.'

This was the man whose appearance Carlyle caricatured in the following elegant phraseology :—

A most portentous face of scoundrelism ; a fat snub abominable face ; dew-lapped, flat-nosed, greasy, full of greediness, sensuality, ox-like obstinacy ; the most perfect quack face produced by the eighteenth century.

Carlyle, however, who would say anything or write anything in his moods of irritability, also alluded to the late Cardinal Newman\* as 'not possessing the intellect of a moderate-sized rabbit'; and the two statements may fairly be juxtaposed.

Mr W. R. H. Trowbridge, to whose recent book I am greatly indebted for material for this brief sketch of Cagliostro's life, well observes that 'there is perhaps no other equally celebrated personality in modern history whose character is so baffling to the biographer.' History has condemned him purely on the evidence of his most

\* Or was it Mr Keble ?

unscrupulous enemies. But while dismissing such one-sided portraits, it is no easy matter to arrive at an unprejudiced valuation of the real man. Of his new biographer's impartiality and candour as well as his careful research of authorities, it is impossible to speak too highly. His conclusions will be all the more widely accepted in view of the fact that he is himself in no sense an occultist. In spite of a rather long chapter dealing with 'Eighteenth Century Occultism,' we feel instinctively and at every turn that the subject is one in which he is obviously out of his depth. Indeed, only on the second page of his biography we come across the following surprising statement. Speaking of 'theosophists, spiritualists, occultists,' all of whom are unceremoniously lumped together, he observes :—

By these amiable visionaries Cagliostro is regarded as one of the princes of occultism whose mystical touch has revealed the arcana of the spiritual world to the initiated, and illumined the path along which the speculative scientist proceeds on entering the labyrinth of the supernatural.

There is no foundation whatever for such a statement. Cagliostro has never been regarded as an authority in any school of occultism. Many, if not most occultists, have been in-

clined to believe that he was more than half a quack. Mr Trowbridge—it is to be said to his credit—has judged him in the light of the evidence more fairly than most occultists. The fact is, Cagliostro with all his good qualities, with all his generosity of heart, his human sympathy, his nobility—yes, it really was nobility—of character, was beyond and above all things a poser and a mystery-monger. He had a magnetic personality, a mediumistic temperament, and almost certainly some clairvoyant power, though it is noticeable that he invariably employed a little boy or girl whose assistance was essential to his predictions. Beyond this, and, I think we must say, more important than all this, he had an incontestable natural healing gift, which he aided by no small knowledge of practical medicine. In these qualifications we have the secret of his success, and also the secret of his failure. He was excessively vain, and loved to impress the multitude. He loved, moreover, to impress them by surrounding himself with an atmosphere of mystery and posing as an occultist, which (probably) he never was. He has left no body of teaching behind him. He has left no followers, no disciples. He

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was merely the comet of a season, though an exceptionally brilliant one. It would be absurd to class him in the same category as such master occultists as Cornelius Agrippa and Paracelsus, or indeed even as Eliphas Levi. He was not cast in the same mould. He belonged to another and a lower type. But his was withal a striking as well as a sympathetic personality, a personality that makes appeal by a certain glamour heightened by the tragedy of his inglorious end, to all that is warni, and chivalrous and romantic in the human heart.

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